Understanding Sense of Community in a Master Planned Community in Richmond's Oval Village

by

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Abstract

This research is aimed at understanding sense of community among residents of a master planned community in Richmond's Oval Village. In particular, my research investigates how affordable housing tenants of Cadence perceive the quality of their social interaction with others and their feeling of sense of community.

A mixed-method approach consisting of an online survey and semi-structured phone interviews was chosen as the research design with the affordable housing tenants of Cadence to capture their experience living in a mixed-income development. Ten affordable housing tenants completed the survey and 7 of them participated in the follow-up interview. Key informant interviews were conducted with the housing operator as well as the City of Richmond staff members to supplement the findings from the tenant survey and interviews.

In addition to filling the knowledge gap around whether master planned communities foster positive social interaction and sense of community among residents, especially in the context of a Canadian suburban city, I hope my research findings will help inform planners how mixed-income housing can be improved in terms of design and implementation to ensure it is socially inclusive and equitable for all.

Keywords: mixed-income housing; master planned community; affordable housing, social interaction; sense of community; social mix.

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My dearest Khan and Avid,

“Think and Wonder
Wonder and Think”
~Dr. Seuss~

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Mixed-income, master planned neighbourhoods have become the new planning phenomenon across our region. By welcoming low-income residents into newly built middle-income neighbourhoods, planners and policymakers are often attempting to achieve the image of a “livable city” built on the foundation of an inclusive community (Rose, 2004, p.281). Although mixed-income communities support socioeconomic heterogeneity and prevent the forming of “poor” neighbourhoods and the associated stigma around living in such neighbourhoods, many criticize mixed-income neighbourhoods for having “homogenising and segregating effects rather than supporting social diversity and cohesion” (Bosman, 2003, p.135).

Planners often prescribe “social mix” to cure the ills of society associated with living in poor neighbourhoods through neighbourhood effects. The idea is that the higher income residents may potentially influence the behaviours and aspirations of the lower income people towards upward social mobility and provide access to information and opportunity not available in low-income people’s own networks (Chaskin & Joseph, 2010; Bucerius et al, 2017)). This assumes that residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds engage in social interaction that is supposed to help low-income people expand their social network and improve their life circumstances.

Despite these claims and the underlying assumptions of social mixing, the empirical evidence on mixed-income developments indicates that limited social interaction occurs among residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, low-income residents have been shown to report an increased level of social stress due to class stigma, a drop in social relationships and an increased level of isolation (Bucerius et al., 2017). Some studies also highlighted how the built environment was creating barriers in building spontaneous interactions and relationships among residents of different classes as affordable housing units were often segregated from the market housing units (Thurber et al., 2018; Bucerius et al., 2017). Researchers agree that deconcentrating poverty and preventing formation of poor neighbourhood is an important issue to tackle but the extent to which “social mix” is an effective method for building healthier communities is debatable.

On the other hand, the municipal planning policies that guide the development of master planned communities are often based on contemporary planning principles like New Urbanism. The foundation of the New Urbanism is that the main shortcoming of a typical suburban development is not aesthetic or environmental but the lack of sense of community and that "sense of community" can be fostered with appropriate physical design (Talen, 1999, p.1361). More specifically, New Urbanist principles are aimed at "putting people closer together and getting them out on the streets and mingling in shopping areas close to their place of residence" (Talen, 2000, p.173). The physical design elements include well-designed and integrated public spaces, pedestrianism, transit-oriented design and mixed land uses, including mixed-income. However, the extent to which social interaction occurs among residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds in a master planned neighbourhood, where neighbourly relationships are thought to be built afresh, is less studied.

Due to the growing popularity of mixed-income, master planned communities, it seems timely to capture the lived experiences of the affordable housing tenants living in such communities as these communities have been criticized for being primarily built to cater to growing "lifestyle consumerism" among middle-income families for whom the home and the neighbourhood provide "affluence, aspiration and security" (Rosenbaum et al., 2012, p.128). I conducted a case study of a mixed-income development, Cadence, located in Oval Village, a master planned community, in Richmond, B.C., to understand how such neighborhoods help people improve their lives, whether it is improvement in their social life, socioeconomic status or their overall health. Is it a matter of increasing access to high quality resources, like public or private amenities and services or educational opportunities, or is it necessary to interact with neighbors to obtain the full benefit of such resources? More specifically, my research question asks: How does mixed-income, master planned community influence sense of community among the affordable housing tenants of Cadence?

A mixed-method approach consisting of an online survey and semi-structured phone interviews was chosen as the research design with the affordable housing tenants of Cadence to capture their experience living in a mixed-income development. Key informant interviews were conducted with the housing operator as well as the City of Richmond staff members to supplement the findings from the tenant survey and interviews.

In addition to filling the gap in the literature on social mix in master planned communities in the context of a Canadian suburban city, I hope my findings will help inform planners how mixed-income housing can be improved in terms of design and implementation to ensure it is socially inclusive and equitable for all.

1.1. Key Research Concepts & Definitions

In this section, I expand on the definitions and concepts around affordable housing as well as master planned communities. These concepts are fundamental to understanding my research and are repeated throughout this thesis. Firstly, I provide insight into how affordable housing is generally defined in Canada and in our region and its importance to our society. Secondly, I delve into what constitutes a master planned community and look into planning principles such as complete community and New Urbanism that underpin the development of such neighbourhoods.

1.1.1. Affordable Housing

Housing affordability is a relative term that links housing costs to a household's income. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines affordable housing as a housing unit, either rented or owned, for which households spend less than 30% of their pre-tax income on housing costs (CMHC, 2019, p.1) and this definition of affordable housing is widely used across the nation. It should be emphasized that the term affordable housing not only applies to social housing, it also encompasses the rest of the housing types along the housing continuum including shelter, transitional housing, supportive housing, subsidized housing, market rental and homeownership (Figure 1) (CMHC, 2018). For renters, housing costs include rent and utilities and for owners, costs can include mortgage payments, strata fees, home insurance and utilities (AHS, 2017, p.3). Furthermore, affordable housing should not only be affordable in cost, it should also be adequate in condition, and suitable in size (CMHC, 2019, p.3) for the household.

Figure 1. Housing Continuum

Source: CMHC, 2018.

The City of Richmond's definition of affordable housing is similar to that put forward by CMHC: "Affordable housing is defined as housing that a single person or household can afford to rent or purchase without spending more than 30% of their before-tax income" and the housing needs to meet the adequacy and suitability standards (AHS, 2017, p.3). The City of Richmond's Affordable Housing Strategy highlights the importance of affordable housing to the entire community by:

- Supporting economic growth by providing local workers and residents with affordable housing options locally;
- Providing opportunities for households to live and work in Richmond, which reduces pressure on urban sprawl and traffic congestion;
- Creating sustainable, resilient and well-integrated neighbourhoods;
- Supporting social diversity and inclusion by allowing low and moderate income households to find affordable housing within their communities; and,
- A healthy environment for families with children to live and thrive in the community. (AHS, 2017, p.3)

Affordable housing not only benefits the economy, it is also the foundation of fostering social and environmental sustainability. Metro Vancouver is one of the most expensive places to live in Canada, and households often have to commute further to find housing that is affordable. The Housing and Transportation study by Metro Vancouver highlighted that a combination of housing and transportation cost should be the new measure of housing affordability. Renter households earning less than $50,000 annually were found to spend 67 percent of their income on housing and transportation costs (Metro Vancouver, 2015, p.17). In this sense, availability of affordable housing in communities is vital in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating equitable, inclusive and diverse communities.

Inclusionary Housing Policy

The City of Richmond's inclusionary housing policy requires the provision of "an affordable housing contribution as part of new residential development projects in exchange for density bonus". For apartment developments with greater than 60 units, developers are required to dedicate 10 percent of their floor area towards affordable housing units on site. A cash-in-lieu contribution is required for apartments fewer than 60 units, townhouse developments and single family rezoning applications (AHS, 2017, p.45). It is the primary zoning policy that the City of Richmond uses to create a mixed-income communities.

The idea behind the inclusionary housing policy is that by doing so, municipalities are preventing the formation of poor neighbourhoods or the "ghetto", and creating an equitable and diverse society. Historically, living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood is linked to lower earnings, educational achievement, and health (Sampson et al., 2002). Inclusionary housing policy seeks to ensure that low or moderate income households are not isolated from the mainstream society and that they have access to affordable housing in a neighbourhood with high quality services and amenities. In other words, inclusionary housing policy provides opportunities for the affordability needs of the low and moderate income households to be met in new housing developments. My research studies whether such a neighbourhood can have a positive impact on residents' lives, either through access to community services and amenities or through engaging in social interaction with neighbours who have higher socioeconomic status compared to them.

1.1.2. Master Planned Community

The City of Richmond and Metro Vancouver have shared goals of creating compact and complete communities that are more walkable, mixed use and transit oriented through adoption of the Official Community Plan (OCP, 2012, p.1-4) and the Regional Growth Strategy (Metro Vancouver, 2011). These contemporary planning principles and their features inform the development of master planned communities across the region. In other words, the term "master planning" refers to the design and construction of a large scale project (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.123) that falls in line with municipal planning strategies and guidelines. On top of housing, in-building amenities

like a gym, swimming pool, yoga studio and study room are built and public and private services that include daycares, health clinics and shopping centres are established in the neighbourhood as part of the master planning process to enhance the living conditions of the inhabitants.

Contemporary planning principles, whether “complete community” or New Urbanism, advocate for neighbourhoods that:

- allow residents to meet their day-to-day needs within their community;
- are walkable and transit-oriented to reduce reliance on personal vehicles; and,
- offer diverse housing options, including affordable housing.

In this regard, I view master planned communities as amenity-rich, walkable, transit-oriented neighbourhoods that provide a diverse range of housing, in terms of unit sizes and types, as well as housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households. As such, features including mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable and transit-orientation are highlighted throughout my research. In my research, I chose to focus on New Urbanist principles as these principles are founded on a belief that the physical environment can have a direct impact on people’s pattern of social interaction and sense of community. This research investigates whether physical planning principles can affect residents’ feeling of sense of community, especially in socially mixed communities.

In addition, I use the term “community” in my research when I refer to the social or people aspect of the built environment whereas the term “neighbourhood” is used in this thesis to refer to the physical aspects of the community.

1.2. My Positionality

I came to know about Cadence and its affordable housing units when I was searching for a daycare close to home for my son during the summer of 2018. Finding a daycare has always been our biggest struggle since having our son and finding one that is well-run and close to home in a neighbourhood that was still very much under development was near impossible. Or so we thought until we came to learn about Willow Early Learning Centre in Cadence, a new development that contained market-rate as well as affordable housing units plus a childcare facility.

We got on the waitlist for Willow immediately and were invited to tour the facility shortly afterward. After several months of waiting, we were offered a spot in the daycare and my daily routine involved dropping off and picking up my son from Willow. Because I held a full-time job, I would drive to Cadence and our entry point to Willow was through the underground parking lot. As such, we never used the front entrance. I would often run into the Cadence tenants in the hallway, the elevator or at the daycare and we would engage in casual interactions that involved our children, or the weather. Although my encounters with Cadence women were often brief, I felt that they had formed a tight-knit community amongst themselves. They would drop off or pick up one another's children from daycare and visited each other's homes regularly. In comparison, I still don't have that kind of relationship with my neighbours, even with the ones that have children, and I don't have anybody in my building that I can turn to in times of need. We have been living in the same condo for 4 years now.

During the summer of 2019, I went on maternity leave from work to have our second child. I started walking my son to daycare and using the front entrance on a daily basis. This is when I noticed that strangers on the street were looking at us slightly longer than what I would consider "polite" as we left Cadence. It could be that people were staring at my growing belly which was humongous on my 5ft frame. People never initiated conservations with us. This wasn't what I normally experience near our home that is only 5 minutes away from Cadence. When I was outside my own home, people I encountered would smile at us, ask me when I am due, how old my newborn is or whether it is a boy or a girl. Generally, we would get much more positive reactions from strangers on the street near home.

This led me to put myself in the shoes of the tenants of Cadence and wonder if they have similar experiences. Do they feel looked down on by the members of the broader community? Do they feel unwelcomed or discriminated against in their neighbourhood because of where they live? Moreover, it led me to question the planning principles that advocate for social mix in the name of building an equitable and inclusive society. My very different encounters in and outside Cadence, a building that is mixed-income, fuelled my curiosity to conduct this research with hopes of untangling my personal experiences from the perspective of the affordable housing tenants.

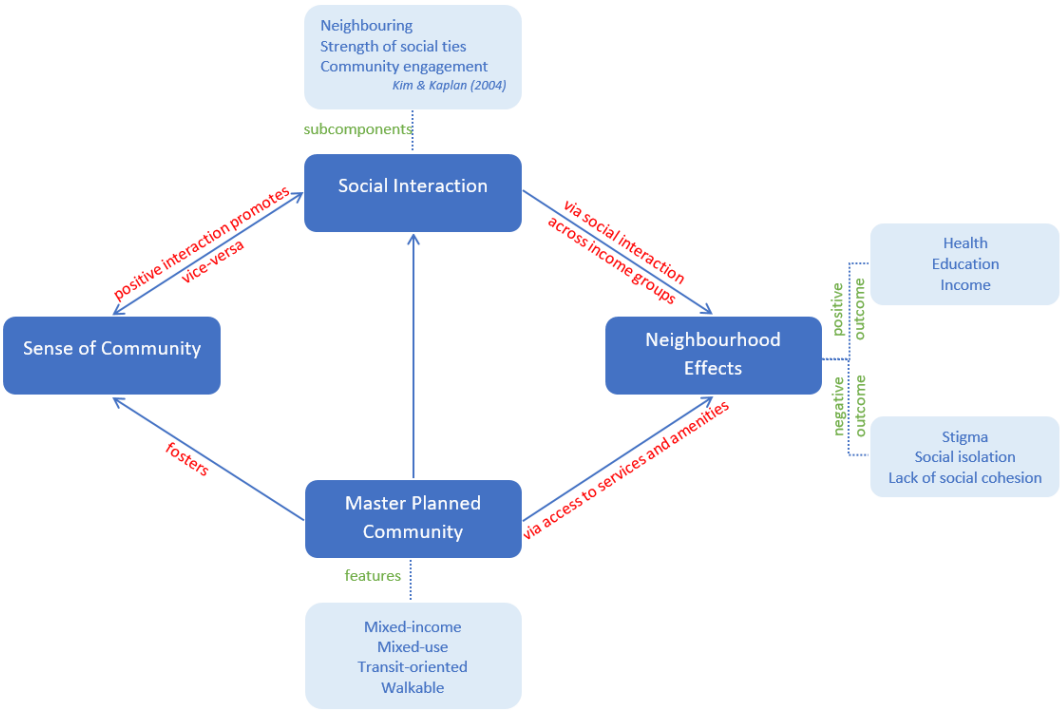
Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework & Literature Review

This chapter provides review of the literature for this research per the Conceptual Framework I developed in Figure 2. To start, I look at the link between “Social Interaction” and “Sense of Community”. I conceptualized that positive social interaction promotes feeling of belonging and vice-versa. The concept of social interaction and its subcomponents and their role in fostering sense of community is summarized in the first body of literature to contextualize these terms for the purposes of this research.

Secondly, I postulated that physical design features of “Master Planned Community” can promote “Social Interaction” and “Sense of Community” among residents. Consequently, I look into literature on social interaction and sense of community in master planned communities and investigate if social interaction and sense of community can be improved or fostered with the right physical design elements.

The last body of literature explores the concept of neighbourhood effect to understand if neighbourhood really matters for people to improve their lives, whether it is improvement in income, overall health, life achievements, the quality of life or their social lives. In my conceptual framework, I theorized that positive “Social Interaction” amongst people from different income groups can yield positive “Neighbourhood Effects”, whereas negative relations could result in negative outcomes. I also theorized that positive “Neighbourhood Effects” can be achieved through access to quality services and amenities available in a “Master Planned Community”. Consequently, I look at literature on neighbourhood effects that result from social interaction as well as from accessing quality services and amenities in the neighbourhood. I also highlight how the resulting neighbourhood effects may vary depending on the person’s life stage in this body of literature.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework



2.1. (Defining) Sense of Community & Social Interaction

Sense of community is a multidimensional term that generally refers to feelings of belonging, inclusion and the ability to form bonds with people and place. Regardless of the type of community under study or the proposed dimensions that make up sense of community, most researchers agree that it improves quality of life and wellbeing and life satisfaction (Talo, Mannarini, & Rochira, 2014, p.2). The affective or psychological component of sense of community has been most notably defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986). Building on the works of a number of social researchers, they identified membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection as the determinants of community and developed the Sense of Community Index. *Membership* is a feeling of sense of belonging to the community. *Influence* is a feeling that residents can be influential within their neighbourhood. In other words, their definition of sense of community is “a feeling that members have belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (1986, p.9). They

determined that their definition of sense of community applies both to place-based communities and to relational communities that can include professional or spiritual community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.8). In short, the affective components of sense of community can also be referred to as feelings of belonging (Rosenblatt et al., 2009).

On the other hand, the affective dimensions of sense of community that McMillan and Chavis developed, although highly regarded, "remain mainly theoretical with a relatively narrow reference to the sense of community tradition" (Skjæveland, Gärling, & Mæland, 1996, p.414). Their definition of sense of community is primarily based on literature on group cohesiveness and their framework lacked any reference to negative relationships despite the considerable body of literature that suggests that proximity greatly influences negative social relationships compared to positive interactions (Skjæveland, Gärling, & Mæland, 1996, p.414).

Skjæveland et al. emphasized that there is a need for a psychometric tool for assessing neighbourhood social characteristics. As a result, they expanded on the concept of neighbouring to understand sense of community at a neighbourhood level. They proposed that the concept of neighbouring has six dimensions – overt social activities, weak social ties, sense of mutual aid, sense of community, attachment to place and annoyance. The first five dimensions touch on the positive aspects, while the sixth dimension pertains to negative aspects of relationships (Skjæveland, Gärling, & Mæland, 1996, p.414). The concept of neighbouring is further discussed in the next section.

Talen (2000) highlighted that community can also be expressed through localized forms of social interaction. The interactive or the social interaction component of sense of community is critical in efforts to encourage formation of "community" on master planned community, as such engagement and participation by residents in community life gives them a sense of belonging to the area (Rosenblatt et al., 2009). Furthermore, Kim & Kaplan, who developed a framework for sense of community based on literature on sense of community and New Urbanism, identified social interaction as one of the domains that contribute to feelings of belonging to the community (2004). According to the authors, social interaction is defined as a formal (active, planned) or informal (casual, unplanned) social opportunity in which two or more residents attend to the quality of their

relationships (Kim & Kaplan, 2004, p.316) and they hypothesized that social interactions consist of the following subcomponents:

- Neighbouring – informal social interactions with residents living in the neighbourhood;
- Community participation – formal interactions about community issues or engagement in community problems and related activities.
- Casual social encounters (weak ties)– informal, brief social contact between residents who do not know each other and are not neighbours;
- Social support (strong ties) – friendship networks and development of small groups that foster feelings of caring for each other;

This research will be focusing on understanding sense of community from social interaction component, as such the subcomponents of social interaction as proposed by Kim & Kaplan (2004) will be used for this research. These subcomponents are further expanded on in the following sections.

2.1.1. Neighbouring

The concept of neighbouring is mostly associated with observable social interaction and exchange of help and goods and is measured in the total of amount of social interactions residents engage in and the amount of social support as reflected in the quantity of social ties (Skjæveland et al., 1996, p.315). Skjæveland et al., (1996) proposed a multidimensional measure of neighbouring that includes:

- Overt social interaction
- Weak ties
- A sense of mutual aid;
- Neighbourhood attachment;
- Sense of community; and,
- Neighbour annoyance.

A sense of mutual aid is the belief that help is potentially available when needed and it is the predisposition to help or interact with others in the neighbourhood. In other words, neighbours regard each other positively even when little social interaction has

occurred. The place attachment dimension has been studied extensively in relation to the concept of neighbouring. The core idea is that people who feel attached to their neighbourhood are more inclined to interact with others in the neighbourhood and in return, the positive interactions help maintain a sense of attachment to the neighbourhood (Skjæveland et al., 1996, p.417–418).

On the other end of the spectrum of positive social interaction, negative social relationships among neighbours also deserve attention. The “environment-spoiling” hypothesis proposed by Ebbesen et al. (1976) (in Talen, 2000, p.176) could be the starting point for understanding negative relationships like conflict and annoyance among neighbours. Negative relationships could result from the unpleasant things, including loud music, disputes over car parking or upkeep of property that others do in the neighbourhood environment. Ebbesen et al (1976) found that the reasons for liking someone were due to the personal characteristics, while the majority of reasons for disliking someone were in the actions directed towards the environment. This hypothesis emphasizes that the formation of enmities depends more on physical proximity than formation of friendship (in Talen, 2000, p.176). In other words, you are more likely to dislike someone, compared to liking someone, who are in close proximity to you.

Furthermore, Zaff and Devlin (1998) determined that conflict arises when residents openly shared their feelings and personal concerns with their neighbours. Some of the residents who participated in Zaff and Devlin’s study expressed concern that if they discussed a problem with their neighbours, they would use the information against them later. Although self-disclosure of feelings and concerns indicates that residents are comfortable discussing their issues with their neighbours and have social trust that enhances sense of community, it can also lead to “’backstabbing’ because the residents know intimate details about each other’s lives” (1998, p.393). In short, Zaff and Devlin’s study found that high levels of social interaction can lead to conflict. Their study took place at four low-income public housing developments for the elderly in Connecticut and fifty-five residents participated in the study. There were no significant differences in terms of the research participants’ age or length of occupancy in the building. As occupants of public housing, residents were of approximately the same socioeconomic level (1998, p.386), which may make their experience different from mixed income housing residents.

In a case of Regent Park in Toronto, a now revitalized, mixed-income neighbourhood, the researchers found that the original residents were displaying trouble-making behaviour, like damaging their vehicles and scaring them in public, towards the new homeowners, but not towards the buildings or the neighbourhood (Bucerius et al., 2017, p.500). This research finding is based on in-depth qualitative interviews with 60 young original Regent Park residents, aged 16 to 30, who still reside in Regent Park, as well as 50 new homeowners who are new to the neighbourhood. In a revitalized neighbourhood like Regent Park, the affluent residents who bought into the neighbourhood were "perceived and treated as colonizers of a space that the original residents see as strictly theirs" (Bucerius et al., 2017, p.500), causing the original low-income residents to cause nuisance targeted towards the new residents. This sense of invasion makes it difficult for social interaction to take place among the old and new residents.

There is a distinct difference between the revitalized Regent Park and a master planned community of Oval Village, in that all residents are new residents in Oval Village. However, a perception of "us and them" (Bucerius et al., 2017, p.500) might also exist in Cadence due to the separate entrance for the low-income housing. In Regent Park, the original and new residents live in separate buildings (Bucerius et al., 2017, p.496) and this physical configuration prevents residents from engaging in meaningful social interactions with each other that would yield positive social outcome (Bucerius et al., 2017, p.500). The original residents of Regent Park reported that new residents "stare" at them and quickly "rush by" and their general day-to-day encounters with the new residents are characterized by feeling of discomfort and uncertainty (Bucerius et al., 2017, p.494).

In a nutshell, neighbouring involves positive and negative aspects of social interactions, expectations, and attachments of individuals with the people living around them and the place in which they live (Skjæveland et al., 1996, p.418). Positive social interaction fuels the feeling of attachment to the neighbourhood as well as the feeling that help is available when needed. Negative social relationships may be part of the story when residents do unpleasant activities targeted towards others in the neighbourhood or towards the neighbourhood itself, but also arise when residents openly share their personal lives with others.

The concept of neighbouring encompasses multiple dimensions (Skjæveland et al., 1996) that overlap with Kim and Kaplan's (2004) proposed subcomponents for social interaction, including weak ties and sense of mutual support, which will be discussed later.

2.1.2. Community Participation

Researchers have determined that participation in community activities provides opportunities for social interaction among residents and through such interaction, sense of belonging to the community is fostered (Prezza et al., 2001; Albanesi, 2007). In that sense, participation in community activities not only fosters social interaction among residents, it also becomes the conduit for a strong sense of community. Ekman & Amna (2012) proposed that community-level engagement is not limited to political involvement; it also includes civic engagement whereby residents engage in activities based on personal interest or societal issues that matter to them (p.292). In this sense, engagement in community issues or community activities provides opportunities for formal social interactions to take place among residents.

Civic engagement has been used as a buzzword in recent years to cover anything from voting in elections to donating to charity or from participating in community sports leagues to political rallies. Robert Putnam popularized the concept of civic engagement when attempting to highlight the importance of social capital in the society which *"refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them"* (2000, p.19). In other words, social capital refers to resources that are accessible through social interactions and social networks, reciprocity and norms and mutual trust.

Aside from the social interaction component of social capital that has already been discussed earlier, social norms, trust and reciprocity will be discussed briefly in turn. Social norms are the unwritten social rules regarding social interactions with others in the neighbourhood and behaviour in public spaces. The unwritten agreements could relate to the use of parking spaces or parents keeping an eye on playing children other than their own. The benefit of shared social norms is that it creates social control, preventing nuisance from occurring in the neighbourhood. Mutual trust is the prerequisite

for social interaction, support and reciprocity but may also develop as a result of positive social interaction and mutual support (Kleinhans, Priemus, & Engbersen, 2007, p.1076).

Putnam theorized that due to civic disengagement, social capital is eroding in society, consequently causing a decline of "community" (2000, p.184). In his book, *Bowling Alone*, he analyzed citizen engagement by looking at activities like, "club meetings, visits with friends, committee service, church attendance, philanthropic generosity, card games" (2000, p.185). Putnam's focus was more on "engagement" than on the "civic" or the "political" types of efforts that build social capital (Ekman & Amnå, 2012, p.284). In this regard, the concept of social capital as expressed through a gamut of activities is the precursor to fostering a sense of community.

The purpose of this research is not to define civic engagement or assess social capital, but rather it is to understand the level of resident participation in community events and activities and whether attending such events helps foster social interaction and sense of community.

Albanesi, Cicognani, and Zani (2007) investigated the relationship between sense of community, civic engagement and social well-being in Italian adolescents aged between 14-19 years old. In particular, they wanted to explore if involvement in organized activities improves sense of community and civic engagement. Their findings revealed that involvement in group activities presents opportunities for enhancing levels of connectedness to the community. Group membership provided opportunities for adolescents to interact and establish relationships with people outside their immediate family and friends network (p.398), enhancing sense of community. The authors highlighted the importance of differentiating the types of groups adolescents belong to. For adolescents, membership in sports groups yielded a higher sense of community due to active participation and involvement in club activities (p.398). Furthermore, the authors concluded that members of sports and religious groups are likely to feel a higher sense of community as the members share similar goals and values which are critical for the members to consider the community trustworthy enough to establish meaningful relationships with others in the group (p.398).

A similar finding was reported among adults in a study done by Prezza et al. (2001). Their study involved conducting questionnaires with 630 men and women, aged

20-65, living in Central Italy. Their analysis showed that people who participated in community events and activities were more likely to have stronger neighbour relations, which includes talking to neighbours, visiting neighbours in their homes, and exchanging favours with neighbours (p.41-42), and to have a stronger sense of community (p.47). Furthermore, women were more likely than men to participate in community activities and more likely to have stronger neighbour relations (p.42). On the other hand, in Zaff and Devlin's study on assessing sense of community among the elderly, residents who interact with their neighbours often are more likely to be aware of local groups or community-related organizations and become members those social clubs where they attend activities like dinners and dances, increasing opportunities for social interaction (Zaff & Devlin, 1998, p.385).

These findings suggest that community events and activities are important venues for social interaction that fosters sense of community. Although the aforementioned studies did not take place in mixed-income, master planned communities, they illustrate a critical point that participation in community activities enhances sense of community among residents and that engagement in community life and events is the building block of "community". Furthermore, drawing on Putnam's definition of social capital, community participation provides opportunities to create a trustworthy environment for the members to build meaningful relationships with others, share social norms and provide mutual support, consequently increasing social interaction and sense of community.

2.1.3. Strength of Social Ties

There are different levels of social contact when people engage with others. People can give each other practical help or emotional support or their relationship can be limited to saying hellos. In his theory of the "Strength of weak ties", Granovetter (1973) classified impersonal ties based on their strength into strong, weak and absent. The strength of a tie depends on a combination of factors such as the amount of time the relationship has endured, emotional intensity, and intimacy (Granovetter, 1973, p.1361). *Strong ties* are formed among friends and family networks that foster feelings of caring for one another, whereas weak ties work to bridge across these more intimate networks of people in a neighbourhood. In other words, *weak ties* are informal social interactions among residents who do not know each other and are not neighbours. Granovetter's

theory emphasized the importance of weak ties in transmitting information or resources across greater social distance (p. 1366). Weak social ties also promote social integration as they often occur among diverse groups of people with different interests (Skjæveland et al., 1996, p.416). Granovetter (1973) defined absent ties as gestures like “nodding” between people living in the same neighbourhood, or the daily contact they have with the coffee shop barista. Absent ties are hard to measure empirically but are important for people’s day-to-day lives and in fostering sense of belonging to the neighbourhood among residents. Henning and Lieberg (2007) defined absent ties as the “weakest” weak tie, or “acknowledge contact” whereby you recognize a person and nod or say hello when you meet.

Henning and Lieberg (2007) conducted two case studies in Sweden in 1983 and a follow-up study in 1993 to examine the structure and content of place-based neighbourhood networks. The residential area, Lambohov, for the case study was located not far from Stockholm and its development started in 1979. It consists of housing that varied in terms of unit sizes, dwelling types and tenure and was surrounding by local services like daycare centres, elementary schools, a shopping centre and community centre. By 1994, Lambohov had 6663 residents living in 2555 dwellings, of which 62 percent were rented (p.7-8).

Their longitudinal study examined the extent of different groups of people developing different types of social ties at a neighbourhood level. They conducted interviews with residents of Lambohov to reflect residents' experiences, opinions about their housing and the services in the area as well as studying the social network. Henning and Lieberg (2007) found that socio-economic status of the residents greatly influences the scope and depth of social ties. Based on the residents’ occupation, they classified residents as blue-collar workers and white-collar workers.

Their findings revealed that white collar workers have multiple venues of strong social ties, including family, work and close friends whereas for blue-collar workers, neighbourhood is an important arena for establishing strong ties. In other words, white collar workers have larger and more loose-knit networks that are more geographically spread than blue collar workers (p.17).

Blue collar workers have more local ties which could explain why they meet their neighbours more often compared to white collar workers (p. 22). Generally, neighbour contacts were reported to be of little importance to participants' lives whereas relatives represented the largest and the most important strong tie category (p.16-17). Henning and Lieberg (2007) were interested in knowing if the amount and pattern of neighbour contacts (as strong ties) changed over time among residents and found that strong ties remain stable and the size of people's primary network remained unchanged over time. Their findings suggest that neighbourly strong ties reach a level of saturation over time despite a common conception that neighbour contacts grow in number with time (p.16-17).

Their findings suggest that people meet their neighbours in the area often but on a superficial basis. At a neighbourhood level, weak ties are easier to establish as they lack intimacy that is required to develop friendship and they are also easier to maintain due to frequent contact. A feeling of home, security and social support were reported among residents when asked what these contacts meant to them (Henning & Lieberg, 2007, p.22). Based on Granovetter's theory, weak ties established at neighbourhood level provide opportunities for disadvantaged groups to get access to resources that they may be deprived of as people's primary social networks tend to stay stable over time. In other words, weak ties at the neighbourhood level act as bridges to the society outside, strengthening people's possibilities of accessing resources that are available beyond their immediate social network (Henning & Lieberg, 2007, p.23).

These findings showcase the importance of weak ties at a neighbourhood scale in terms of fostering feelings of home, security and social support. For residents of Cadence, these superficial social ties might prove easier to establish with their immediate neighbours and others in the neighbourhood to enable Cadence residents to feel a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. Henning & Lieberg (2007) determined that blue collar workers have smaller, locally-based strong ties that foster feelings of caring for one another and a sense of social support. This could explain my observation of women in Cadence, as having close relationships with each other. The extent to which weak ties serve as bridges to resources outside their immediate network is what I will be testing during this study. As a frequent visitor of the daycare facility, I run into residents of Cadence quite often, but I have not been in a position where I share

information or resources with the other mothers I meet. My interactions with the women have been more superficial to date.

2.2. Sense of Community in Master Planned Community

As municipalities in the Lower Mainland struggle to accommodate their increasing populations, master planned housing developments are being undertaken by private developers to meet the demand for housing. The intention of a master planned community from the suburban developer's perspective is to deliver a "community" that is a "friendly, safe and attractive living option on the suburban fringes of metropolitan centres for the relatively affluent and aspiring middle classes" (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.123). The term "master planning" refers to the design and construction of a large scale project (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.123) that falls in line with the municipal planning strategies and guidelines. On top of housing, community amenities, like a gym, swimming pool, yoga studio and study room, are built to enhance the living conditions of the inhabitants as well as public and private services that include daycares, health clinics and shopping centres established as part of the master planning process.

Architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk advocated for complete communities in the early 1990s and Peter Calthorpe (1993) prescribed transit-oriented developments (Grant, 2009, p.12). In 1993, these forces were united around the belief that the "physical environment has a direct impact on our chances for happy, prosperous lives …and that well-designed cities, towns and neighbourhoods and places help create community: healthy places for people and businesses to thrive and prosper" (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2019) to form the Congress for the New Urbanism (Grant, 2009, p.12). The Charter of New Urbanism is comprised of 27 principles that aim to guide public policy, and urban planning and design at regional, neighbourhood and building levels (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2019). The proponents of New Urbanism drew substantially on what Jane Jacobs (1961) was advocating for in terms of mixed-use, connected street patterns and walkable neighbourhoods.

During the post-war period in Canada, planners adopted and embraced the principles of the Garden City movement, whereby the ideal suburbs incorporated "a hierarchy of streets (with crescents, loops, and cul-de-sacs), separation of pedestrian-vehicular traffic, public and community services in the neighborhood center, shopping on

the edge of the neighborhood, and homogeneous residential environments" (Grant, 2003, p.235). Don Mills was the first privately developed community in the suburbs of Toronto that embodies the principles of the Garden City movement that resulted in wide lots, detached houses, winding streets, and cul-de-sacs. In the 1960s, planners were attacked by activists like Jane Jacobs for "robbing cities of their vitality"(Grant, 2003, p.237). In the 1970s, many Canadian cities started promoting planning principles that are now components of New Urbanism such as infill development, mixed use and residential densification. Saint Lawrence neighbourhood in Toronto that was redeveloped from an industrial site and the redevelopment of False Creek in Vancouver are considered as the precursor to the New Urbanism in Canada. These projects of the 1970s created vibrant, dense and mixed-use neighbourhoods and offered early examples of what New Urbanism promotes (Grant & Bohdanow, 2008, p.110).

In 2006, Grant and Bohdanow (2008) conducted a survey of 42 New Urbanist communities across Canada. They defined New Urbanism as having features such as compactness, walkability, mix of housing types, attractive public space, transit-orientation, and high quality design features (Grant & Bohdanow, 2008, p.111). The highest concentration of New Urbanist communities was found in Ontario (22), followed by British Columbia (11) and Alberta (4), which suggests that major urban centres like Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary have high demand for high-density housing which creates opportunities to successfully adopt New Urbanist principles in new developments (Grant & Bohdanow, 2008, p.112). They hypothesized that New Urbanism is attractive when implemented on the growing edge of the urban periphery because it adds an urban cachet to new development, where prospective buyers buy "the idea of the city within the convenience of a fresh home in a spanking new subdivision" (Grant & Bohdanow, 2008, p.122). They also determined that New Urbanist communities were clustered in areas that are experiencing rapid population growth and high housing costs (Grant & Bohdanow, 2008, p.113).

Grant and Bohdanow (2008) noted that their inventory captured projects that the developers or local authorities considered as "New Urbanism" and it is not meant to be an exhaustive list of New Urbanist developments in Canada. There is no other research that investigates the current state of New Urbanist communities across Canada but it is safe to say that the number and the scale of such communities increased significantly as rapid population growth across the country drives demand for more housing. More

importantly, New Urbanism is one inspiration for a larger trend in master planned communities that may not be guided by the New Urbanism in name but that shares similar features such as Oval Village.

The City of Richmond, as the urban fringe city bordering the City of Vancouver, is experiencing population growth and high cost of housing and its City Centre is undergoing major redevelopment per objectives and strategies set out in community planning policies like the Official Community Plan and the City Centre Area Plan. The Official Community Plan for Richmond was first adopted in 1986, updated in 1999 and later in 2011 with a planning horizon of 2041, reflecting a range of challenges such as the impact of climate change, population growth and changing demographics. This 2041 OCP establishes a broad vision, supporting goals, objectives, policies and new directions respecting land use, mobility, infrastructure, an ecological network and parks and open spaces (OCP, 2012, p.1-2). Relevant to physical planning, City of Richmond has the following goals of:

- creating compact communities and directing growth to areas already designated for urban development; and
- creating complete communities that are more walkable, mixed use and transit-oriented to reduce automobile use; (OCP, 2012, p.1-5).

Building on the objectives in the OCP, the City Centre Area Plan lays the groundwork to enable Richmond's City Centre to become a City Centre that:

- provides opportunities for people to live, work, play, and learn in a sustainable, high-amenity environment;
- benefits all of Richmond by developing a series of compact and engaging, higher-density, urban villages supportive of a broad range of high-quality amenities, including affordable housing (CCAP, 2009, p.1-1).

These excerpts from Richmond's planning documents illustrate that they are infused with principles of New Urbanism in terms of designing for mixed-use, highly walkable neighbourhoods that have a mix of housing types and are transit-oriented. As such, I feel that discussion on the essence of New Urbanism is important in understanding how residents of Cadence interact and form a sense of community in the master planned community of Oval Village. A detailed review of the Official Community Plan, City Centre Area Plan and Affordable Housing Strategy in relation to Cadence will be discussed in Chapter 4.

A critique that gave rise to New Urbanism is that the main shortcoming of a typical suburban development is not aesthetic or environmental but the lack of sense of community. Consequently, New Urbanists claim that “sense of community” can be fostered with appropriate physical design (Talen, 1999, p.1361). According to Emily Talen, who reviewed the social implications of New Urbanism principles, New Urbanism asserts that physical environmental variables affect the frequency and quality of social contact and ultimately, sense of community. In other words, The Charter of New Urbanism principles are aimed at “putting people closer together and getting them out on the streets and mingling in shopping areas close to their place of residence” to increase opportunities for social contact and foster sense of community (Talen, 2000, p.173). The physical design elements include well-designed and integrated public spaces, pedestrianism, transit-oriented design and mixed land uses. A subset of the mixed-use category is the mixing of housing sizes and price levels at the neighbourhood scale to reflect the economic diversity of the community (Talen, 2000, p.181). Not only does income-mixing of housing prevent segregation, it also provides opportunities for equitable access to resources.

To understand social interaction and sense of community in a master planned estate built on the principles of New Urbanism, Rosenblatt et al. conducted a case study in the suburbs of Brisbane in Australia. The study site, Springfield Lakes comprised of approximately 1631 occupied homes with about 4852 residents, some 49% of whom are aged between 25 and 54 years. The median household income for the neighbourhood was reported to be higher than the surrounding neighbourhoods, supporting the conception of master planned communities as sites for “aspiring” middle income earners. Family households make up the dominant household type with a large number of couples raising young children. In terms of housing tenure, 60% of the homes are owned while the remaining proportion are under rental tenancy (2009, p.125).

In order to understand how ideas of community are constructed and enacted by residents of Springfield Lakes, a survey was administered asking various questions about why people moved to Springfield Lakes, what aspects of the neighbourhood they valued most, the frequency of contact with friends and neighbours in and around Springfield Lakes, and the extent to which they participate in community activities organized around the neighbourhood. The authors found that residents referred to “the existence of friendly and smiling people who say hello, and the feeling of belonging

somewhere that results from these minor elements of interaction" when asked what they meant by community and why they believed it was present in the neighbourhood (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.133). A significant number of participants also expressed community in terms of the lake and the walking paths around the estate – not only because this facilitated friendly interaction with other residents, but because they seemed to associate community with the aesthetic standards of the physical landscape (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.134). When examining the data related to the nature and extent of social interaction with others in the neighbourhood, a majority of the respondents reported that they talk to their neighbours several times a month (70%) and have friends in the neighbourhood (58%). Regardless, a significant proportion reported that they never socialized with their neighbours (44%) and most would turn to family in times of need (76%) rather than neighbours (1%) (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.135). These findings suggest that this particular master planned community was successful in delivering a "special place" that is aesthetically pleasing, where residents feel at home, but not successful in influencing residents' patterns of social interaction (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.138).

This case study undertaken by Rosenblatt et al. illustrates the actual level of social interaction that occurs in a master planned community that has adopted neotraditional planning principles to improve residents' interaction and ultimately their sense of community. Their findings also highlight differences in people's perception of sense of community, with some expressing community in terms of physical features of the neighbourhood rather than psychological feeling of belonging to a community. Although not explicitly clear, it appears that the residents of Springfield Lakes are homogeneous in terms of their income level. Existing literature on social interaction determined that people are likely to interact with someone who is in similar life circumstances. In other words, the more homogeneous the neighbourhood, the more likely are residents to interact with each other (Talen & Koschinsky, 2014; Zaff & Devlin, 1998). It is therefore unknown, building upon these research results, how much social interaction occurs in master planned communities that are socioeconomically heterogeneous. My research hopes to fill this gap in the literature by studying social interaction in a mixed-income, master planned community in Richmond, BC.

2.3. Neighbourhood Effects on Low-Income Residents

Neighbourhood effects is a concept rooted in economics to capture an idea that "the action of one individual imposes significant costs on other individuals for which it is not feasible to make him compensate them or yields significant gains to them for which it is not feasible to make them compensate him" (Friedman, 1955). The term was most notably used by Milton Friedman in 1955 in a paper titled "The Role of Government in Education" to explain the importance of education to the society. His argument is that people's education not only benefits themselves, but it also benefits society as a whole. He argued that a child's education contributes to other people's welfare by promoting a stable and democratic society through widespread acceptance of common values and a degree of literacy and knowledge. Yet, is not possible to determine the money value of the benefit, and therefore, there is a "neighbourhood effect".

In social sciences field, the concept of neighbourhood effects refers to the impact of social, cultural and demographic conditions of the neighbourhood on residents (Wilson, 2012, p.136). A number of researchers used the concept to explain people's voting patterns in the 1970s (Macallister et al., 2001). In 1987, in his book *The Truly Disadvantaged*, William Julius Wilson stimulated research and discussion of neighbourhood effects by stating that "the inhabitants of a 'ghetto' have social problems simply because they live in a ghetto" (Ostendorf, Musterd, & Vos, 2001, p.373). This culture of poverty thesis created a paradigm that led to hundreds of empirical studies across social sciences disciplines (Wilson, 2012, p.136). In the context of social sciences, this concept suggests that living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood depresses one's life outcomes such as earnings, educational achievement, and health (Sampson et al., 2002). Research on neighbourhood effects suggests that concentrated poverty increases likelihood of social isolation from mainstream society, welfare dependency, low education attainment, involvement in crime, behavioural issues among adolescents, nonmarital childbirth and unsuccessful family management (Wilson, 2012, p.137).

Consequently, in the world of contemporary town planning, planners often prescribe "social mix" to mitigate the societal issues associated with living in poor neighbourhoods through neighbourhood effects. The existing literature on neighbourhood effects suggests that positive outcomes can be achieved either through social interaction across income groups or through low-income people accessing high

quality local services and amenities that they were deprived of previously. The literature also suggests that neighbourhood effect has a wide range of individual outcomes depending on the person's life stage (Ellen & Turner, 1997, p.848). The findings from the literature review on mechanisms through which neighbourhood effect is achieved is discussed first followed by discussion of the impact of neighbourhood effect depending on a person's life stage.

2.3.1. Neighbourhood Effects via Social Interaction

For adults, the impact of neighbourhood is likely to occur through their access to services, information and job market from networking with others in the neighbourhood (Ellen & Turner, 2003, p.326). In the context of socially mixed neighbourhoods, social interactions are supposed to enable "the low-income residents to become good citizens through the instrument of middle-class role modelling and leadership … as well as access to formal and informal networks …that link [them] to job opportunities" (Arthurson, 2010, p.51) This is said to be most easily achieved by placing low-income households in neighbourhoods predominantly occupied by private owners (Ruming et al., 2004, p.236) where social interactions among residents from different tenures are supposed to facilitate formation of social networks among homeowners and low-income residents.

However, it is not clear whether physically mixing people from different socioeconomic backgrounds leads to social interaction among the groups and whether the level of interaction that occurs is significant enough to have positive social outcomes. Jupp et al. (1999) conducted research to investigate social interactions among residents of mixed-income housing by interviewing 1000 residents of ten mixed-income developments across England. They purposefully set out to interview a large number of residents in order to draw general conclusions about mixed-income developments as previous research on social relations in such developments tends to be "confined to one region or small in scale" (Jupp et al., 1999, p.37). Their results showed that less than two-fifths of residents have any contact with someone from a different tenure and only 4 percent of residents reported that would rely on someone from a different tenure for assistance in finding a job (Jupp et al., 1999, p.42), suggesting that social interaction across income groups is limited and often superficial in nature.

Ruming et al. (2004) conducted a case study of a mixed-income neighbourhood in New South Wales to understand sense of community among residents. The neighbourhood was comprised of social housing that only made up 8 percent of the total dwellings and the social housing was concentrated in three areas. They distributed 480 questionnaires to residents within 1 kilometre radius of the public housing and sixty-eight questionnaires were returned for analysis, yielding a response rate of 14.2 percent (p.239). They also conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 residents who indicated their interest in further participation in the research (p.240). The authors found that social housing tenants were not readily accepted in their community, which was dominated by owners, and there was too little mixing across tenure groups to have any positive neighbourhood effect on the low-income residents (Ruming et al., 2004).

On a more positive note, studies (Arthurson, 2010; Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000; Jupp et al., 1999) highlighted that children acted as "catalysts" for mixing of residents across different income groups as children had "no notion of tenure difference" (Morris et al., 2012, p.9). More specifically, two-thirds of the residents with children engaged in social interaction with other parents from different tenure (Jupp et al, 1999). The same researchers found that social interaction is facilitated through children's play and identified local school or daycare as an important place that promotes social interaction and networking among parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

In a study by Rosenblatt et al. (2009) on social interaction among residents of a master planned community, the authors found that 44 percent of residents never socialize with their neighbours but families with children reported having strong social ties to their neighbours, in which case the children acted as social bridges for the parents as illustrated in the quote below:

> "We've probably got about 12 couples that are really, really good mates, and we voluntarily socialize with each other all the time. We all have young kids so whoever's house we go to, the kids can play and it doesn't matter. You're not worried about wrecking the house or anything. This same group of friends, to give you an idea, at Christmas last year we voluntarily spent Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, News Year's Eve and New Year's Day with the same group of friends. So that kind of gives you an indication of how close we are as a group (Female resident of 3 years, age 30-35)" (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.136).

Although this study does not indicate if this particular master planned community is mixed income, it is important to highlight how people are able to form stronger social connections through their children.

In North America, studies done (Chaskin & Joseph, 2011; Thurber et al., 2018) in the USA have found that mixed income developments did not foster positive social interactions across varying income groups which is the precursor to having positive neighbourhood effect on the low income residents. Furthermore, a review of studies done on mixed-income developments in the USA by Thurber et al. (2018) found that low-income residents reported increased levels of social stress due to class stigma, a drop in social relationships and increased level of isolation with some highlighting how the built environment was creating barriers in building spontaneous interactions and relationships among residents of different classes as affordable housing units were often segregated from the market housing units.

In the Canadian context, Bucerius, Thompson and Berardi (2017) conducted a case study on Regent Park, Canada's oldest and largest public housing development as it undergoes revitalization process, whereby more affluent residents are buying into the neighbourhood. Since the revitalization began in 2006, Regent Park has transformed into a mixed-use, mixed income neighbourhood that offers a host of amenities and retail businesses that were not there previously (p.490). They conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with the original housing residents as well as new middle-class homeowners of the neighbourhood to examine if social interactions occur among residents from different tenures. Their study reported no meaningful social interaction taking place among residents from different tenures and some low-income residents were more socially isolated than before the revitalization (Bucerius et al., 2017, p. 499).

In another study on Regent Park, authors found that the lack of social interaction between and within tenures was also reported but it also meant that "antagonistic interactions between tenures" (Rowe & Dunn, 2015, p.1266) was absent which is more positive than the cases reported in the USA where the "issue of race infuses all discussion of social mix" (Rowe & Dunn, 2015, p.1259). It is important to note that these are the experiences of residents of a revitalized neighbourhood, Regent Park, where a significant proportion of former low-income residents were displaced, and new middle-class residents were introduced to the neighbourhood. As the consequence of

redevelopment and revitalization efforts, social ties were broken and the low-income residents no longer had the support system they previously had in their neighbourhoods, requiring them either to establish new ties with the new residents who displaced their friends or make-do with the limited social ties that still exist.

This body of literature illustrates that the level of social interaction that occurs among residents from different socioeconomic background is low but children play an important role in facilitating interaction among adults in some cases. These findings also question the social benefit the low-income residents could bear from living close to well-off people as low-income people have been found to be more comfortable asking for favours or information from someone who is in similar life circumstances as themselves. Furthermore, a low-level of social mixing like in the case of Cadence, which has only 5 percent of affordable housing units clustered in one block within the development, could result in more stigma and social discrimination than positive social outcome as shown in research by Ruming et al (2004). On the positive side, women have shown to benefit the most from living in middle-class neighbourhoods. However, the literature on social interaction among socially mixed residents of master planned communities, where neighbour relationships are thought to be built afresh, is limited and the findings from this research may potentially help fill in this gap.

2.3.2. Neighbourhood Effects via Service Delivery

One of the goals of social mix policies is to promote social equity by providing equal access to services and facilities for all. Availability and accessibility of basic services such as affordable grocery stores and neighbourhood parks can have significant impacts on individuals' physical and mental health. Poor neighbourhoods often lack access to healthy and affordable food options in the neighbourhood and parks are less likely to be used for recreational purposes due to safety concerns. Neighbourhoods with well-maintained parks and recreational spaces can provide opportunities for physical activity and availability of affordable grocery stores make it more convenient for residents to maintain healthy lifestyles (Ellen & Turner, 1997, p.837).

For low-income households, access to local services and amenities are especially important for their day-to-day lives as they are often constrained by lack of

economic resources to access services that are located further away. Local facilities and amenities, such as shops, day care centers, gyms, schools, playgrounds, and parks, also offer opportunities for social interaction through everyday encounters (Tersteeg & Pinkster, 2016, p.757). In this sense, availability and accessibility of local services and amenities is important in social mix not only for serving as venues for social interaction but also as means to promote equity through access to high quality urban services.

Ruming et al., (2004) found that low-income residents of a mixed-income neighbourhood in New South Wales, Australia, use local amenities, like shops and sporting fields, more frequently than do owners in the area. More specifically, 42 percent of low-income residents use local amenities at least weekly compared to only 26 percent of owners. Due to their economic circumstances, reliance on public transportation to get around was stressed among low-income residents. Availability of services and amenities within their neighbourhood meant that low-income residents did not have to go through the hardship of accessing services that are further away. Their findings also suggested that owners and tenants led different social lives: low-income residents used local services and amenities as part of their social and family activities, while the owners' social lives took place outside their neighbourhood (Ruming et al., 2004, p.245), limiting opportunities for social interaction in this case.

These findings were also echoed by Atkinson & Kintrea (2000) who explored the impacts of a mixed-income redevelopment on a social housing estate in Scotland, on the residents. In addition, their interviews with residents revealed that the local amenities were of low quality and some basic facilities like banks or ATM machines that were frequently used by owners were not available in the neighbourhood, which consequently led to owners taking their business elsewhere.

On the other hand, in master planned communities, which often get criticized for catering to the growing "lifestyle consumerism" of the middle-class (Rosenbaum et al., 2012, p.128), local services and institutions can mostly represent the sociocultural interests of residents with higher levels of financial and cultural capital (Zukin, 2010). In studying social mix in a newly built neighbourhood in Amsterdam, Tersteeg & Pinkster (2016) found that low-income residents visit other parts of the City for their interests and needs whereas owners reported to be satisfied with the amenities in the neighbourhood. Cafes, restaurants and organic grocery stores had no value for low-income households,

who would rather travel to the other parts of the city for more affordable options (p.771). Authors proposed that lifestyle and ethnic differences may be leading to different consumption preferences and practices as the low-income residents were mainly of non-Western European ethnic background including Moroccan, Turkish, Iraqi and Surinamese, whereas the owners were predominantly Dutch (p.760).

In summary, this section of literature review illuminates the importance of local services and amenities that meet the needs of diverse groups of people in order to achieve an equitable and inclusive society as well as for promoting social interaction among residents. This is especially relevant in the context of a master planned community where everything from housing to services and amenities are being planned and built from the ground up.

2.3.3. Neighbourhood Effects on Children

It seems unlikely that neighbourhood environment will have a direct influence on very young children (preschool children) given that young children's primary contact is their parents. Duncan et al. (1994) highlighted that importance of family characteristics, especially that of mothers' education, and mental health, compared to neighbourhood characteristics on the children's early development. They found that neighbourhoods have indirect effects on development of very young children through effects on their parents and supportive social and institutional networks for parents are important factors in the cognitive development and behaviour of young children (p.315).

As children enter elementary school, they come in contact with people other than their parents, including their teachers, classmates and the parents and families of their classmates. This is also when they begin to develop conceptions about what is normal and appropriate behaviour based on their observation of adults and their peers (Ellen & Turner, 1997, p.849). At this stage, family remain their main source of contact and information, but the neighbourhood environment becomes increasingly important in children's development (Ellen & Turner, 1997, p.849).

Recent research studied the implications of the US Moving to Opportunity (MTO) Program, which assisted in re-housing poor people from neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty, on the long-term outcomes of the children who moved to low-

poverty areas with their families when they were young (under age 13). Researchers found that children who moved to better neighbourhoods when they were young are more likely to attend college and have significantly higher incomes as adults. More specifically, they found that children whose families moved to low-poverty areas through a housing voucher when they were less than 13 years old found to have an annual income that is 31 percent higher on average as adults compared to the annual income of the control group (that was not offered a voucher) in their mid-twenties (Chetty et al., 2016, p.39).

On the contrary, moving to better neighbourhoods did not yield positive educational and income outcomes for older children (teenagers), suggesting that the gains from moving to a better neighbourhood fall with the age when children move (Chetty et al., 2016, p.23). When children enter their teenage years, they spend less time with their families and more time socializing with their peers. As such, the potential impact of neighbourhood is most significant at this stage of life. However, the disruptive nature of moving and breaking existing social bonds can be detrimental for older children, outweighing the positive outcomes of the move, such as forming new peer groups that challenge them to reach higher levels of academic and professional achievement (Ellen & Turner, 2003, p.326).

2.3.4. Neighbourhood Effects on Adults

Studies of neighbourhood effect on adults mainly focus on health and employment outcomes. Chetty et al. (2016) found that exposure to better neighbourhoods as adults had insignificant influence on adults' incomes in the long-term for the participants of the MTO program (Chetty et al., 2016, p.32). On the contrary, studies on mothers who moved their families through the Gautreaux program to low-poverty neighbourhoods revealed that the female heads of household spent less time receiving public assistance (Deluca, 2005) and experienced long-term benefits from living in high resource neighbourhoods (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). Interviews with these mothers revealed that they could rely on their neighbours for support such as transportation and childcare so that they could go to work or school to enhance their capabilities. At the same time, they had to learn to adopt and comply with the social norms of their new neighbourhood, which was not tolerant oftheir previous behaviours. As they had lived all their lives in housing projects where such norms did not exist, some

expressed challenges initially in adjusting. Overall, moving to a better neighbourhood allowed these women to realize their potential and made them more confident in their future prospects (Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

Health outcomes of moving to low-poverty areas for adults is reported to be most striking based on self-reported health status, due to reduction in anxiety from moving to safer neighbourhoods as fear of crime is reported to be the main factor in the desire among participants of the Moving to Opportunity program to move to better neighbourhoods (Katz et al., 2003, p.183). More specifically, 58 percent of the adults who moved to better neighbourhoods through the program reported that their health was good or better which is 18 percent higher than that reported among people in the control group (Katz et al., 2003, p.196). Forty-seven percent of the people also reported higher levels of "calmness and peacefulness" which is 14 percent higher than what is reported among residents in the control group. These findings suggest that overall health of residents who moved to better neighbourhoods are more likely to be through improvement in mental health than physical health. However, improvement in physical health cannot be ruled out in the long-term, as through regular access to healthy food options or use of public parks or recreational facilities can enhance physical health (Katz et al., 2003, p.197).

In summary, this section of literature review illuminates the importance of local services and amenities that meet the needs of a diverse group of people in order to achieve an equitable and inclusive society as well as for promoting social interaction among residents. Furthermore, exposure to middle-class neighbourhoods at a very young age results in significantly positive life outcomes in the long run for the children. For adults, there is very little improvement in their economic circumstances, but single mothers benefit significantly from living in low-poverty neighbourhoods through social support and services that are available in the area. Positive health outcomes, including mental health outcomes, of living in safer neighbourhoods were reported among adults and this could also contribute positively to children's early childhood development. Overall, these findings suggest that mixed income housing is likely to reduce persistence of poverty across generations (Chetty et al., 2016, p.41).

Based on these findings, the neighbourhood effect on the single mothers and their children living in Cadence can potentially be significantly positive. As residents of

this master planned community, Cadence women have access to quality local services and amenities, public transportation and daycare and schools for their children to attend in the neighbourhood and both the women and their children are very likely to benefit positively from living in a safe and amenity-rich neighbourhood. In addition, based on my encounters with Cadence women, they appear to have formed a close-knit community amongst themselves, providing mutual support for each other when needed.

2.4. Literature Review Conclusion

I started off my literature review by examining different subcomponents that make up social interaction as proposed by Kim & Kaplan (2004). These include the concept of neighbouring, strength of social ties (weak, strong or absent) and community participation as contributors to engaging in social interaction.

Neighbouring involves positive and negative aspects of social interactions, expectations, and attachments of individuals with the people living around them and the place in which they live (Skjæveland et al., 1996, p.418). The feeling of attachment to the neighbourhood as well as the feeling that help is available when needed are fuelled by positive interactions. Negative social relationships not only result from the unpleasant activities experienced from others in the neighbourhood (Ebbesen et al, 1976), but also arise when residents openly share their personal lives with others (Zaff & Devlin, 1998).

Among the different types of social ties, at a neighbourhood level, weak ties are easier to establish as they lack intimacy that is required to develop friendship and they are also easier to maintain due to frequent contact. Weak ties established at a neighbourhood level provide opportunities for the disadvantaged groups to get access to resources that they may be deprived of without these social ties. In other words, weak ties at the neighbourhood level act as bridges to the society outside, strengthening people's possibilities of acquiring resources and information that they otherwise would not be able to access within the boundaries of their own social network (Henning & Lieberg, 2007, p.23). For tenants of Cadence, these superficial weak social ties might prove easier to establish with their immediate neighbours and others in the neighbourhood to enable Cadence tenants to feel a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood. The extent to which weak ties serve as bridges to resources outside their immediate network is what I will be investigating during this study. As a frequent

visitor of the daycare facility, I run into Cadence tenants quite often, but I have not been in a position where I share information or resources with the other mothers I meet. My interactions with the women have been more superficial to date.

Community-level events and activities are important venues for social interaction that foster sense of community. Furthermore, drawing on Putnam's definition of social capital, community participation provides opportunities to create a trustworthy environment for the members to build meaningful relationships with others, share social norms and provide mutual support, consequently increasing social interaction and sense of community.

The second body of literature reviewed whether social interaction occurs among residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds, especially in master planned communities where everything from housing to services and amenities is being planned and built from the ground up using contemporary physical planning and design principles. Research suggests that master planned communities are successful in delivering a "special place" that is aesthetically pleasing, where residents feel at home, but not successful in influencing residents' patterns of social interaction (Rosenblatt et al., 2009, p.138). Other studies have found that the more homogeneous the neighbourhood, the more likely are residents to interact with each other (Talen & Koschinsky, 2014; Zaff & Devlin, 1998). In the case of socially-mixed communities, research findings suggest that social interaction among people from different groups is low but children play an important role in facilitating interaction among adults in some cases.

Furthermore, low levels of social mixing like in the case of Cadence, which has only 5 percent affordable housing units clustered in one building within the development, could result in more stigma and social discrimination than positive social outcome as shown in research by Ruming et al (2004). However, the literature on social interaction among socially mixed residents of master planned communities, where neighbourly relationships are thought to be built afresh, is limited and the findings from this research may potentially help fill in this gap.

Lastly, I reviewed literature on the concept of neighbourhood effects which suggests that positive neighbourhood effects can be achieved either through social

interaction among people from different socioeconomic background or through low-income people accessing high quality local services and amenities that they did have access to previously. The literature highlighted the importance of local services and amenities that meet the needs of diverse groups of people in order to achieve an equitable and inclusive society as well as for promoting social interaction among residents (Ruming et al., 2004; Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000, Zukin, 2010; Tersteeg & Pinkster, 2016). Furthermore, depending on the person's life stage at the time of moving to a better neighbourhood, individual outcomes as a result of neighbourhood effects varied considerably. For example, children who were exposed to middle-class neighbourhoods at very young age were found to have higher education attainment and higher income as adults (Chetty et al., 2016, p.39). Positive health outcomes, including mental health, of living in safer neighbourhoods were reported among adults and this could also be contributing positively to children's early childhood development. Furthermore, single mothers seem to benefit significantly from living in middle-class neighbourhoods through social support and services that are available in the area. Overall, these findings suggest that mixed income housing is likely to have positive health outcomes on children and adults alike and reduce the persistence of poverty across generations (Chetty et al., 2016, p.41).

These findings showcase that the potential impact of the neighbourhood effects on Cadence women and their children can be significantly positive. As Cadence is a master planned community, women have access to quality local services and amenities that meet their day-to-day needs. The women may also feel improvement in their mental health from living in a safe neighbourhood as well as having neighbours that they may rely on. Their physical health may improve in the long term from accessing parks and trails nearby regularly. These improvements in the mothers' overall health could potentially have positive impacts on the children's development in the long run.

Chapter 3. Methodology & Research Design

To fully understand how sense of community is enacted in a mixed-income, master planned community, relevant municipal documents were reviewed and a mixed method approach consisting of an online survey and semi-structured phone interviews was chosen as the research design. Typically, a survey method lacks depth and is often not useful for gaining a full understanding of the social phenomenon of interest (Babbie & Roberts, 2018, p.234). As such, the follow-up semi-structured interview method complemented the survey method by allowing me to capture the authentic accounts of the participants' lived experiences to get the full picture of the topic under discussion.

I chose to do a case study on a single case to "explore in-depth nuances of the phenomenon and the contextual influences on and explanations of that phenomenon" (Baxter, 2010, p.81). Although case studies are often regarded as "non-generalizable", the in-depth understanding of a case is valuable on its own and it can help broaden the theory around the case being studied (Baxter, 2010, p.82). This method is not only exploratory and descriptive, it can also be used as explanatory insight into the topic at hand (Babbie & Roberts, 2018, p.268).

Data for this research was collected during the summer of 2020 (May – August) using a number of methods. A combination of survey and qualitative interviews were conducted with the affordable housing tenants. Furthermore, to supplement the data I gathered from the tenants, I conducted semi-structured phone interviews with a staff member from Atira Women's Resource Society and one current and one former staff member from the City of Richmond. The document review, the survey and the interviews were all completed sequentially so that the former process informed some of the questions for the next step and provided opportunity to get clarification along the way. A detailed consent form was provided as part of the survey and verbal consent was obtained during the phone interviews. All interviews were audio recorded.

I would like to note that due to Covid-19 and the restrictions on conducting human participant research, I had to change my research design at the very last minute. I had initially planned on conducting a series of in-depth, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. I changed my plan to a mixed method approach consisting of an online survey and semi-structured phone interviews. I do not think this change in my research

design impacted my research progress negatively. I felt that having a two-level commitment from the participants not only made recruiting for interviews a straight-forward process but also provided an opportunity to clarify survey responses.

Furthermore, I ensured that the quantitative survey I developed incorporated standardized questions commonly found in the literature to allow me to analyze and interpret responses in relation to the existing and relevant information on social interaction, sense of community and master planned community benefits. The survey portion also eliminated some of the introductory questions that would have formed the in-depth interviews, making the phone interviews more focused and efficient.

3.1. Affordable Housing Tenants

Two levels of commitment were required from the affordable housing tenants. Firstly, they were invited to take part in an online survey to share their experiences living in Cadence. The survey is comprised of 20 open- and close-ended questions that are meant to understand the importance of certain features of a master planned community like Cadence, the level of social connection among the residents and their sense of community in Cadence or lack thereof (see Appendix A). These questions were informed by my literature review on social interaction, sense of community and master planned communities with site specific adjustments made to some of the questions to make the questions relevant to Cadence. Participants were explicitly asked in the survey and during the phone interview to share their experiences prior to the pandemic in an effort to best capture their living experiences under normal circumstances.

Secondly, tenants had an opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview by phone by leaving their contact information at the end of the survey. The interviews were meant to gain deeper understanding of sense of community among Cadence tenants and the social interactions that they engage in in the neighbourhood.

3.1.1. Recruitment

Due to health directives to stay home and maintain social distancing, I was not able to recruit my study population in-person or have a face-to-face interview with them.

As a result, my recruitment efforts with affordable housing tenants were facilitated by and relied heavily on support from Atira staff.

An approval to post my recruitment materials inviting tenants to participate in an online survey in the building lobby was obtained from Atira and the staff also offered to post my pamphlet in their amenity room. Atira staff also helped distribute my research pamphlets to all women and post on their private Facebook group for current Cadence tenants.

As the staff mentioned that some of their tenants may not be as proficient with computers, I also provided printouts of the survey in case some wanted to complete the survey but lacked access to computer or the knowledge to use it to complete the survey. Each paper copy of the survey was provided in a sealable envelope. Those who completed the paper survey returned them in the sealed envelope to Atira staff who passed them to me when I picked up my children from the daycare.

3.1.2. Incentives

In appreciation for the time taken to participate in my research, I provided my research participants with $15 Shoppers Drug Mart gift card for completing the survey and $20 gift card for participating in the phone interview with funds from SFU Urban Studies Travel and Minor Research Award. The incentives for taking part in the research were not contingent upon completion of the survey or the interview. Participants were informed that they may decide to withdraw from the research at any time during the study and that the incentives for participation will not be withheld as a consequence. However, all participants stayed for the duration of the interview and completed the survey, both online and paper form, in full. The gift cards were handed to the staff members who distributed them to the participants.

3.2. Cadence Staff: Interview & Residents' Demographic Data

In order to supplement the data gathered from residents of Cadence, I conducted a semi-structured phone interview with the Director of Transitional Housing Programs from Atira Women's Resource Society, Sarah Louie who oversees the operations of

Cadence. The intention of the interview was to understand the operations of the affordable housing units as well as how she perceives the level of sense of community that exists in Cadence.

I had developed a personal contact with Sarah since my son started attending the daycare two years ago. She was informed that she is not obligated to participate in my study due to our existing relationship and that she can decline to participate. Since her claims are clearly identified as personal opinions and not used to represent organizational stances, no permission was sought from Atira Women's Resource Society.

I also obtained the demographic information (age, ethnicity, # of children, ages of the children, employment status) of the current residents from her while making sure that the data contained no identifying information such as name or the unit number of the tenants in order to protect the privacy of the residents.

3.3. City of Richmond: Document Review & Interview with Staff

Prior to undertaking my field research, I reviewed municipal documents related to the development of Cadence to get an in-depth understanding of the development from a physical planning perspective. This process also helped inform some of my survey questions. A majority of the documents were available online on the City of Richmond website and the city staff supplied the documents like the agreements and the RFEOIs. In particular, I reviewed the following documents:

- *Official Community Plan* (OCP) is a legal community planning document for managing the City's social, economic, urban design, transportation and environmental future. It sets out a vision, goals, objectives, policies, guidelines and land use designations that reflect overall community values that have been determined through a public consultation process (OCP, 2012, p.vii). The OCP 2041 places emphasis on improving the health of neighbourhoods, building a vibrant downtown, enhancing social development and preserving environmental quality (OCP, 2012, p.1-1).

- *City Centre Area Plan* (CCAP) sets out an overall vision for the area along with related goals, objectives and planning principles that pertain to land use, urban design, transportation and community amenities. It is a development management framework that prepares for 2031 needs and describes a future City Centre that:

- Provides opportunities for people to live, work, and play in a sustainable, amenity-rich community;
- Reduces sprawl and concentrates growth towards the City Centre; and,
- Offers a series of compact, complete and engaging urban villages. (CCAP, 2009, p.1-1).

- *Affordable Housing Strategy* (AHS) is an action-oriented framework that guides the City's response to maintain and create safe, suitable and affordable housing options for Richmond's residents. The strategy has five strategic directions, with 22 individual policies that will shape the City's response to affordable housing. The five strategic directions are as follows:
  - Use the City's regulatory tools to encourage a diverse mix of housing types;
  - Maximize use of City resources and financial tools;
  - Build capacity with non-profit housing and service providers;
  - Facilitate and strengthen partnership opportunities; and,
  - Increase advocacy, awareness and education roles. (AHS, 2017, p.1-2)

Moreover, I reviewed the following documents specific to the development of Cadence:

- Development Permit Application;
- Development Permit Panel Report;
- Housing Agreement;
- Childcare Agreement;
- Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) for Affordable Housing; and,
- Request for Expressions of Interest for Childcare.

The interview with the municipal staff provided an opportunity to clarify some of the information I found during my analysis of municipal documents and was intended to gain deeper understanding of the "thinking" behind the planning of Cadence. I had an opportunity to have an interview with a former staff member, Mark McMullen, who reviewed the development application for Cadence at the time. I also had an interview with Childcare Program Manager, Chris Duggan. She has an ongoing relationship with Atira in managing the daycare in Cadence and is aware of the current state of the development.

3.4. Data Analysis

Over the course of summer 2020, I received 10 survey responses, 6 of which were completed on paper and 4 of which were completed online. The survey responses were analyzed using univariate and bivariate analysis methods. The same method was used for analyzing the demographic information I obtained from Atira. For questions with a 5-point scale (agree-disagree scale, importance scale, frequency scale), responses were collapsed into 3 broader scales in order to make patterns more evident in some of the cases. Survey findings were complemented by interview findings with the majority of those who submitted survey responses.

Although all 10 survey respondents volunteered to participate in a phone interview, I was only able to reach and interview 7 of them. I tried to reach out to those who were not reachable the first time around via text message and call two more times before stopping my efforts. As my research participants were battered women, our conversations naturally touched on topics of domestic violence or abuse of some sort. In those instances, I used my interview guide to steer our conversation back to the topic at hand. Probing and clarifying questions were used to follow up on potentially significant information. The interviews lasted about 30 minutes on average.

The semi-structured phone interviews with the tenants provided opportunities to gather information from the source directly to gather rich narratives to inform my understanding of the survey responses. All phone interviews were audio-recorded and I transcribed the conversations after each interview when our conservation was still fresh in my mind. I chose to do selective transcription, focusing on only transcribing the parts that were relevant to my research question. The process of transcription allowed me to further digest the content of the interviews. All interview participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

Interviews with Atira staff, and City staff, both current and former, were used to supplement the tenant interview findings as well as provide clarity and depth to the information I gathered from the document review process outlined in the next chapter. These interviews were also audio recorded and partially transcribed afterwards.

For the analysis, I used coding and memoing techniques to organize and analyze my transcriptions. The coding and memoing process allowed me to identify patterns that

emerged from discussions with participants and these patterns were then organized into themes and sub-themes. In particular, findings from my interviews with tenants are organized in three groups or themes based on my research hypotheses. Although I kept an open mind around patterns or themes that may fall outside my hypothesis, through my analysis, I did not find any responses to fall outside the boundaries of what was expected based on my hypothesis.

Chapter 4. Case Study

4.1. Richmond City Centre Context

The City of Richmond's City Centre covers approximately 930 hectares in area and is bounded by the Fraser River on its north and west sides. Historically, the City Centre is characterized by a combination of low-density, suburban residential neighbourhoods with a commercial spine running along No. 3 Road. The southeast portion of the City Centre is mostly built-out and is a town centre complex that includes parks, schools, library, health centre, commercial units and recreational and cultural complexes, with most of the development concentrating around No. 3 Road and Granville Avenue. Urban Villages north of Westminster Highway are expected to be built-out by 2100; hence, a large proportion of the City Centre is still under development (City Centre Area Plan, 2009, p.1-3). In anticipation of the population growth and the commissioning of Canada Line in 2009, City of Richmond updated and adopted a number of policies and strategies, including City Centre Area Plan (CCAP), and Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) to manage the growth in the most economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way and to create a "downtown that encourages and facilitates social interaction, local economic vitality, personal health and community safety" (CCAP, 2009, p.2-35).

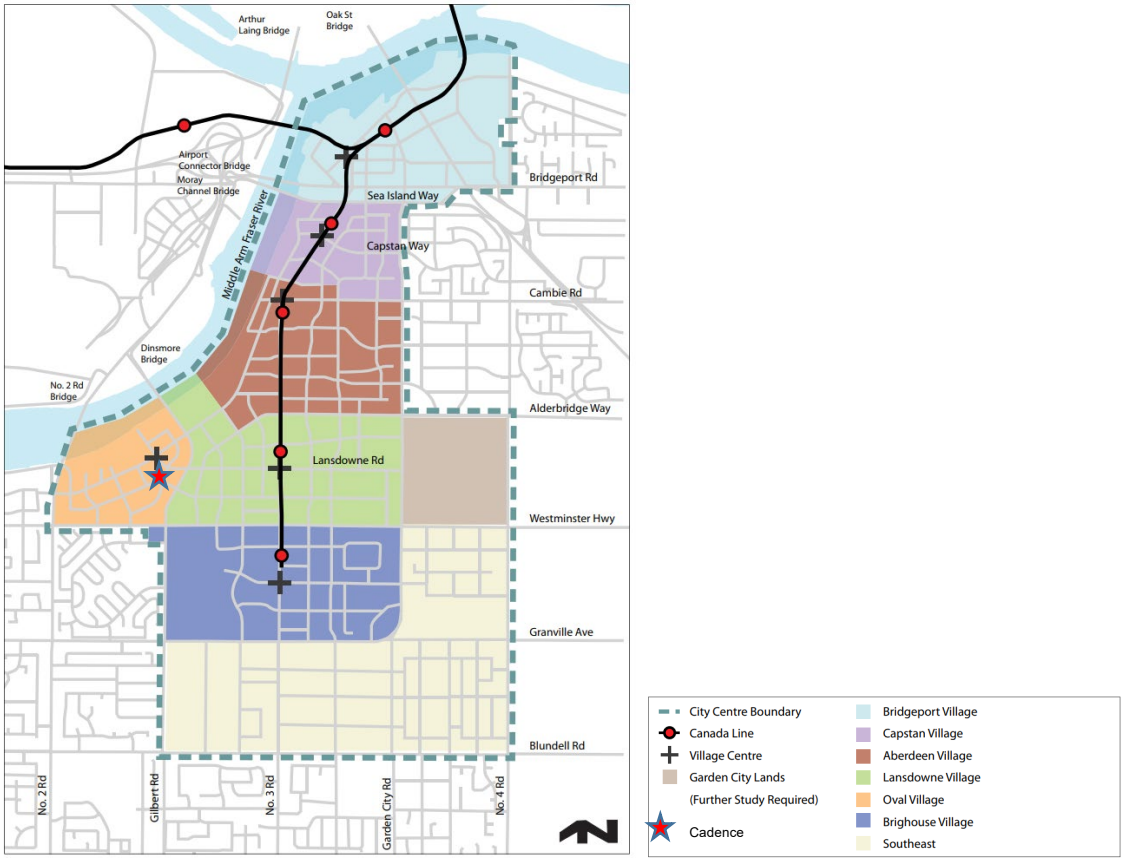
City Centre Area Plan

The City Centre Area Plan set the framework for developing "a series of compact and engaging, higher density, urban villages supportive of a broad range of high-quality amenities, including affordable housing" in the City Centre to reduce sprawl and provide opportunities for people to live, play, and learn in a sustainable, high-amenity environment (CCAP, 2009, p.1-1). The plan includes policies, design guidelines and implementation strategies for the City and the community to work towards the plan's overall vision (CCAP, 2009, p.1-1).

The City uses contemporary planning principles like Transit-Oriented Development, Urban Village Network and Complete Community, to transform its City Centre from industrial land to "a 'world class' urban centre and the centrepiece of Richmond" (CCAP, 2009, p.1-5) to accommodate the City Centre's anticipated growth

from 40,000 to 120,000 by 2100. These planning principles support the development of identifiable, walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented neighbourhoods based on the five Canada Line stations and riverfront development near Richmond Oval to ensure that the day-to-day needs of local village residents are met within the village (CCAP, 2009, p.1-9).

Figure 3. City Centre Boundary and Village Map



Source: City Centre Area Plan, 2009.

As the City of Richmond is historically characterized by large block sizes (800m) that often lacked complete sidewalks for pedestrians and surrounded by large surface parking lots, the CCAP emphasized the need to create a pedestrian-friendly environment that is designed to promote a culture of walking, cycling and transit use. In order to improve walkability in the City Centre, the City has redefined the street grid to create smaller blocks (100m), and ensured that every street has a sidewalk, trees, lighting, and conveniently timed pedestrian signals. In addition, placement of interesting street furniture, and creation of gathering places as well as appealing and animated building

fronts with continuous weather protection ensures residents are able to walk in a safe and welcoming environment (CCAP, 2009, p.2-24).

As the City Centre grows in population, its commercial jobs are projected to more than double by 2100. Taking advantage of the Canada Line as well as the riverfront parks and Richmond Oval, the City Centre encourages mixed land uses to support the City's economic growth in the coming years and these mixed commercial uses are already contributing to the vitality of more pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented neighbourhoods. In the high-density village centres, mixed-use buildings have pedestrian-oriented commercial uses on the ground floor facing public streets and open spaces, promoting walkability as well as economic opportunities (CCAP, 2009, p.2-16).

Affordable Housing Strategy

The Affordable Housing Strategy was updated in 2018 with a goal of maintaining and creating safe, suitable and affordable housing options for Richmond's residents (AHS, 2017, p.1). The strategy promotes development of affordable housing units within close proximity to the rapid transit network and that reflects the needs of identified priority groups, including families with children, lone-parent households, low-income households and persons with disabilities and seniors. Housing affordability is met when a household spends no more than 30 percent of their pre-tax income on housing and this standard is common across provincial and national levels. In Richmond, renter households are more likely to spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing than owner households. Specifically, almost 47 percent of renter households and 23 percent of owner households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing (AHS, 2017, p.16).

The Affordable Housing Strategy has 5 strategic directions along with 22 individual policies and they specifically focus on the transitional and supportive housing, non-market rental housing, and LEMR sections of the housing continuum (Figure 3) (AHS, 2018, p.4.) Together, these policies are meant to benefit the entire community by providing opportunities for:

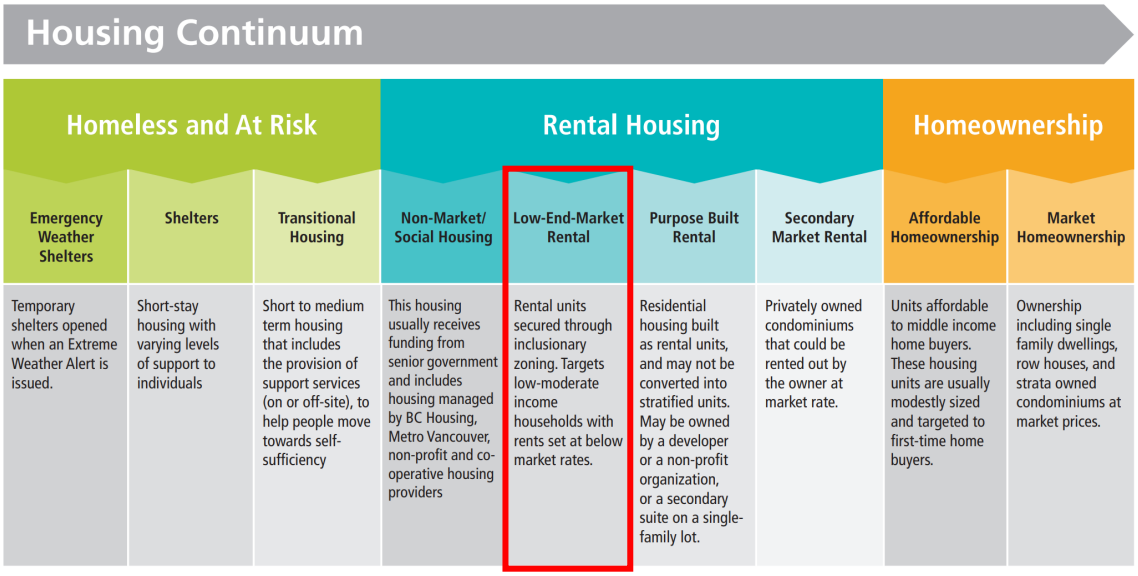
- Creating social diversity and inclusion by allowing low and moderate income households to find suitable housing within their communities;

- Households to live and work in Richmond, leading to reduced pressure on urban sprawl and traffic congestion; and,
- Building sustainable, resilient and well-integrated neighbourhoods where seniors, families and low-income people can live and thrive in the community (AHS, 2017, p.3).

The strategy also identified the following priority groups in need:

- Families;
- Low to moderate income households;
- Persons with disabilities;
- Seniors; and,
- Vulnerable groups including households on fixed incomes, persons experiencing homelessness, women and children experiencing family violence, persons with mental health and addictions issues and Aboriginal populations (AHS, 2017, p.17)

Figure 4. City of Richmond Housing Continuum



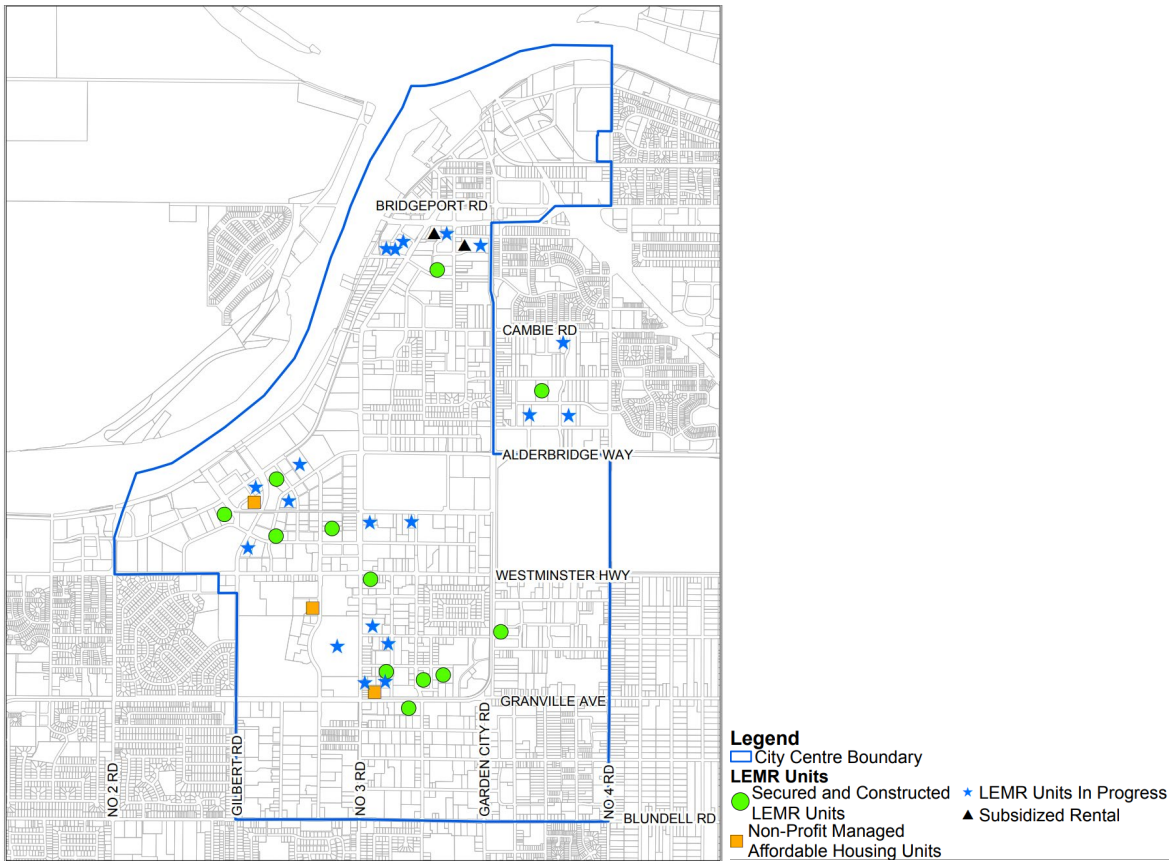
Source: Affordable Housing Strategy, 2017.

Using the City's regulatory tools (i.e. inclusionary zoning), Richmond is working towards developing mixed-income and socially inclusive communities. One of the most notable ways the City is adding affordable housing units is through Low End of Market Rental Contribution program (LEMR) (AHS, 2017, p.7). Under the regulation, all new developments with more than 60 units are required to allocate and build a minimum of

10 percent of their residential floor space to affordable housing units in exchange for additional density beyond what is permitted under the Zoning Bylaw. A cash-in-lieu contribution is required for developments with fewer than 60 units and it is collected in the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund. The fund is intended to support the development of other affordable housing projects (AHS, 2017, p.21).

The LEMR units are secured as affordable in perpetuity through legal agreement on title, restricting the maximum rents and tenant eligibility by income (AHS, 2017. p.21). These units currently target tenants who earn up to $58,050 annually (AHS Update, 2019, p.8) and the current maximum allowable rents range between $811/month for a studio and $1480/month for a 3-bedroom. As of December 2019, the City of Richmond has secured 797 LEMR units and of those 263 have been constructed and occupied by eligible tenants and the remaining units are scheduled to be constructed and occupied by 2023 (AHS Update, 2019, p.8-9).

Figure 5. Location of Affordable Housing Units secured via LEMR program.



Source: Affordable Housing Strategy, 2017.

In terms of the demographics of the residents of City Centre, 85 percent of City Centre residents identify as a visible minority group with the predominant minority group being Chinese (65 percent of the total population). Average household size is 2.7 in the City Centre which is the lowest of all Richmond neighbourhoods, and the median household income is just over $47,000 which is below the average of $65,000 across the City of Richmond. Nearly 35 percent of the residents of the City Centre reported using active modes of transportation (transit, biking and walking) as means to commute to work which is significantly higher than the rest of Richmond due to its proximity to Canada Line stations (City of Richmond, Population and Demographics, 2019).

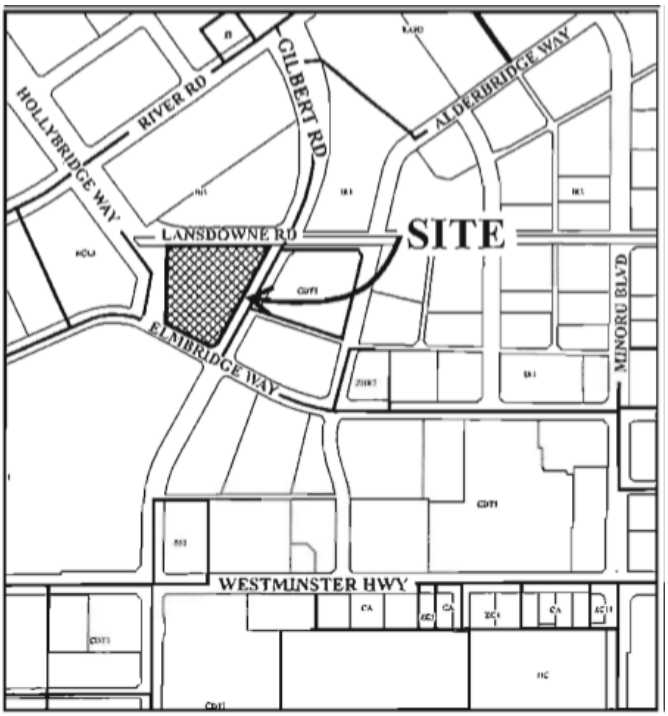
Using contemporary planning principles, the City Centre is transforming into a high-density, mixed-use, walkable and transit-oriented community that offers a range of housing options, including affordable housing, to its residents. As a whole, these features ensure residents are able to access services and amenities within their immediate neighbourhood by walking, and that they are able to rely on public transportation for their short to medium range trips. Moreover, densifying the neighbourhood helps ensure that there is sufficient economic activity to support commercial and retail businesses and jobs.

By planning for affordable housing, the City is working towards creating housing that low and moderate income households can afford within their immediate home community. The above mentioned planning principles and features that are shaping the transformations of the City Centre neighbourhoods are often linked to increased housing costs, whether it is rental or ownership, as it is the private sector that provides market housing at a cost that the market can bear. When housing costs increase, local residents who were previously able to find affordable housing, are pushed out of their home communities to find affordable housing or financially strained trying to keep up with the rising cost of housing. Therefore, it is critical for the City to require affordable housing to be created through new development to help those who are in need of adequate housing that they can afford. Otherwise, low and middle income households may have to the leave the City to find affordable housing elsewhere, or spend a significant proportion of their income on the housing that is available to them in the City. By way of mixing low and middle income households, the City is also preventing concentration of certain populations in areas and planning for a scenario in which all residents have equal access to services and amenities available in the City to build healthy communities.

4.2. Cadence Planning Overview

To understand the level of social interaction that occurs in mixed-income, master planned communities, a mixed-income development, Cadence, located in Richmond's Oval Village, was selected for this case study. The development site is 1.05 ha and is bounded by Lansdowne Road on the north, Hollybridge Way to west, Gilbert Road to the east and Elmbridge Way to the south. Previously, the site was occupied by an office/ retail building that contained the Richmond Fitness World and was rezoned from "Industrial Business Park" to "Residential / Limited Commercial" for this project (City of Richmond, Development Permit Panel Report, 2013, p.2). The nearest skytrain station to Cadence is Lansdowne Station, which is about 10 minutes walking distance away (Figure 3).

Figure 6. Location of Cadence



Source: City of Richmond, Development Permit Application, 2013.

Cadence was completed in early 2017 by Cressey Development Group and is comprised of 245 condominium units in three residential blocks ranging from 5 to 15 stories. This includes:

- Two market residential towers (14 and 15 stories), facing Lansdowne Road, with a total of 225 units;
- A block of 5 townhouses facing Hollybridge Way; and
- 15 affordable housing units and a 5000 sf child care space in the five storey block facing Elmbridge Way.

All three blocks of the development are adjoined by a podium roof garden located on the fifth storey that houses the "club house" (noted as "Amenity Pavillion" on Figure 7) which includes sports court, sauna, yoga studio and a study room. According to the City documents, including the Housing Agreement and Development Permit Panel report, the affordable housing tenants have full and unlimited access to and use of these spaces.

Figure 7. Cadence

Source: City of Richmond, Development Permit Application, 2013.

The ground floor of the development offers a variety of commercial amenities, including a drugstore, bank, dentist office, a number of eateries as well as a fitness centre. A walk-in clinic, physiotherapist, grocery store and many more services are also available in the Oval Village. A significant number of these services, including restaurants and cafes, medical and dental offices and the one and only grocery store in the village, are targeted towards residents of Asian heritage. All but one eatery in the village offers Chinese delicacies and signage in Chinese characters are plentiful in the

village. Within a short waking distance from Cadence, Middle Arm waterfront greenway park overlooking the Fraser River can be found, offering playgrounds, and public art installations. The Olympic Oval can be found 300 metres from Cadence and it is a multi-sport arena, offering fitness centre and fitness classes, climbing wall, basketball courts, two ice rinks, and beach volleyball.

Figure 8. Oval Village services and amenities

The affordable housing units are located on the top three stories of the five storey block and are owned by BC Housing. Atira Women's Resource Society, a non-profit organization, is the operator of the units as well as the childcare facility in the same block. There are 14 two-bedroom units designed to accommodate single-parents with children, and one studio unit which would be suitable for expecting mothers or those with infants. There is also an amenity room with kitchen in the affordable housing block that

can be used for programs and events for the affordable housing tenants (City of Richmond, Development Permit Panel Report, 2013, p.11). All units come with a parking spot but no storage or bike lockers are available for these tenants.

Figure 9. Cadence towers and townhouses facing Hollybridge Way

Figure 10. Affordable housing units facing Elmbridge Way

Cadence is considered to be one of the innovative affordable housing projects built in Richmond using multiple policies and strategies of the Affordable Housing Strategy, namely:

- Inclusionary zoning & density bonusing (more details below);
- Affordable housing special development circumstances (more details below);
- *Family-friendly housing* to meet the needs of families, including but not limited to appropriate number of bedrooms (AHS, 2017, p.21).
- *Transit-oriented affordable housing* to provide better access to community services and amenities and cost-savings to low and moderate income households (AHS, 2017, p.22).
- *Partnership with non-profit agency* to facilitate the creation of non-market and non-profit driven housing developments and to increase the opportunities for non-profit housing providers to own or manage affordable housing units (AHS. 2017, p.24).
- Co-location of community facilities.

Figure 11. Cadence roof-top garden.

The development was subject to the Affordable Housing Strategy which required that 5% of the total residential building floor area to be devoted to affordable housing units, in exchange for density bonusing, as well as 5% commercial floor area to be provided for community amenity, which in this case is a childcare facility called Willow Early Care and Learning Centre. The size of the childcare facility (5000 sf) that was built is well beyond the area that the applicant is required to provide under the density bonus provisions as a community amenity. With transfer of community amenity obligation from a neighbouring site, City of Richmond was able to secure this larger facility to accommodate up to 37 children (12 in infant/toddler group and 25 in 3-5 age group) in

Cadence instead of creating two smaller childcare facilities. This configuration enables the children to receive quality care from infancy up until kindergarten and offers the children a stable and nurturing environment that is necessary for their development. Working with one operator for the childcare, instead of two, may have potentially reduced administrative processes required from the City.

As the affordable housing units are clustered in one, stand-alone building in Cadence, the project was approved as the Affordable Housing Special Development Circumstances (AHSDC) under the Affordable Housing Strategy. In a report to the Planning Committee regarding the development application for Cadence, the Affordable Housing staff iterated that their preferred approach is to "disburse affordable housing units throughout a development to support mixed-income, inclusive communities" (AHSDC, 2013, p.2) and that clustered groups of affordable housing will only be considered if the proposals meet the requirements for AHSDC that ensure the development:

- Considers a community partnership approach for the delivery of community services and supports;
- Exemplifies innovative social programming approach to support tenant well-being and physical, social and economic access to community;
- Generates a sound resident management and operations model that meets the needs of the intended tenant population (i.e. rents, income levels, appropriate level of programming and supports);
- Provides a sound capital financial and operating sustainability plan;
- Ensures unlimited access for tenants to indoor and outdoor amenity spaces; and
- Includes a sound property management model to address maintenance, repair, upkeep and financial costs related to these requirements. (AHSDC, 2013, p.2-3).

In addition, under the AHSDC, projects are able to secure rents below the threshold established under the AHS and seek and secure financial support from senior levels of government subject to Council approval (AHSDC, 2013, p.3).

The purpose of the AHSDC is to provide affordable housing, programming and community supports to meet the targeted and specialized needs of an intended low-income population (i.e. households of seniors, single parents, individuals experiencing

disabilities). More importantly, the AHSDC requirements are to discourage the formation of affordable housing clusters and to ensure that the affordable housing tenants are not segregated from the market-oriented population. In other words, the AHSDC requirements ensure that the clustered affordable housing tenants' well-being and livability are not compromised and that there is support available for the tenants to build social connections with the rest of the community (AHSDC, 2013, p.4).

At the time, the City of Richmond had already reviewed or was in the process of reviewing rezoning applications for a couple of other projects under the AHSDC. The Kiwanis Towers for seniors was already approved and the Storeys Affordable Housing Project to support vulnerable populations, including persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, persons with mental health and addictions and low-income families, was under review.

There was an apparent need for affordable housing for lone parents. As part of the Affordable Housing Special Development Circumstances, affordable housing units in Cadence are programmed to support lone parent families with children and the location of a childcare facility in the same building provides complementary and necessary services for the tenants of the affordable housing units. In order to facilitate this use, the Housing Agreement outlines the key terms:

- The developer, and future owners, retain ownership of the affordable housing units and work jointly with the City to select a qualified non-profit housing provider and enter into a service agreement to co-manage the affordable housing units with the owner.
- The City and owner work with the selected non-profit affordable housing provider and local non-profit community service and health providers to develop a coordinated approach for access and delivery of housing, social programs and supports for the families (e.g. life skills, self sufficiency, financial literacy, health education, higher education, and employment opportunities).
- The City-owned childcare facility would be operated by a non-profit childcare provider with the expectation that spaces would be provided to accommodate children from the affordable housing units.
- The developer, and future owners, agree to cover all costs related to building envelope maintenance and upkeep in addition to all maintenance and upkeep of all parts of the Affordable Housing Air Parcel (AHAP).
- An easement in favour of the AHAP will provide the affordable housing owners and tenants to have access and egress over and use of all of the

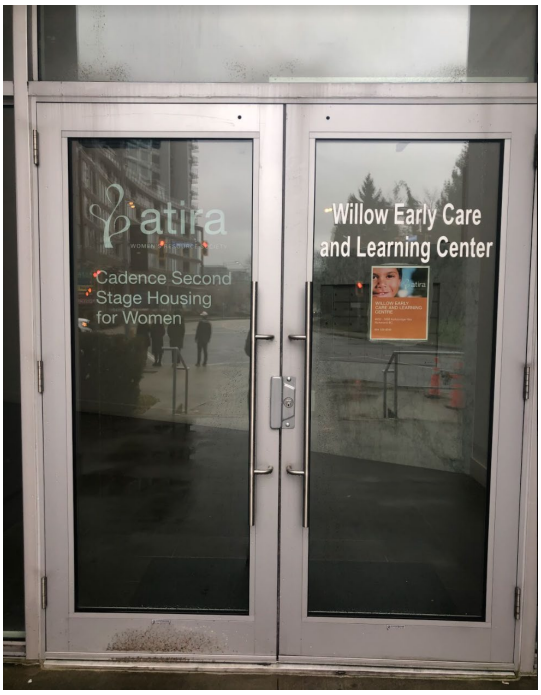
> Development's common outdoor and indoor amenity areas at the same hours and terms as for the market housing residents. The affordable housing unit tenants and the housing provider will not be responsible for any of the costs for maintaining these spaces. (Addendum to Affordable Housing Conditions, 2013. p.3-4) (in Public Hearing Agenda, 2013).

In summary, Cadence was approved under the AHCDC to enable the City, non-profit housing provider, community service and health providers to work collaboratively to deliver social programs and supports for low-income, lone parent households. The agreement also allowed the affordable housing tenants priority access to the childcare facility as well as all indoor and outdoor amenity spaces in Cadence.

4.3. Cadence Operations Overview

Cadence is second stage transitional housing for women and children who have fled domestic violence. Families are allowed to stay in Cadence for maximum of two years and they are expected to transition into community housing at the end of their term. The Province created a 2-year term for second stage housing with expectation that BC Housing would offer to them low-income subsidized housing in the vicinity. However, in reality, BC Housing has been unable to fulfil that commitment and the current average wait time is five to seven years for subsidized housing to become available within BC Housing portfolio (AHS Update, 2019, p.5).

Figure 12. Affordable housing & childcare entrance



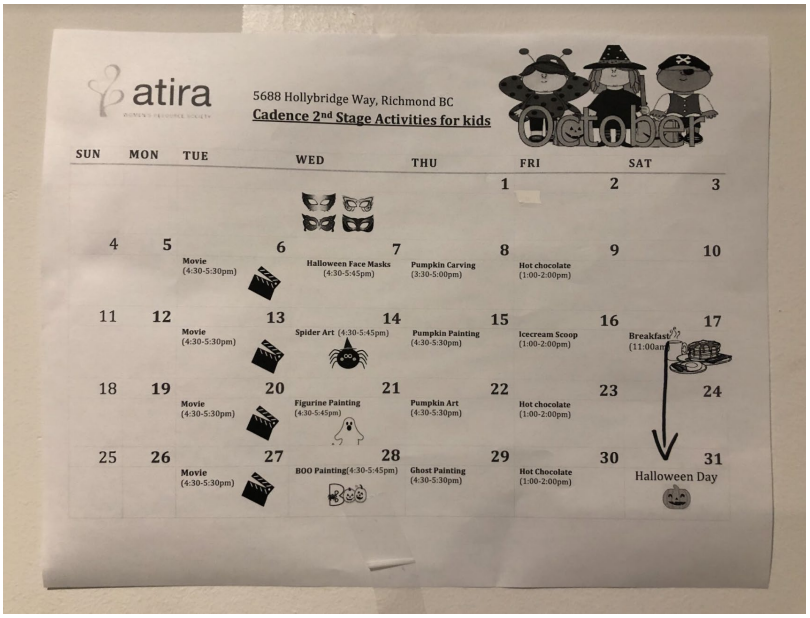
Cadence is currently in its third year of intake and it has supported over 35 families so far. On average, 80% of the women remained in Cadence minimum of 2 years. Cadence operates under the Residential Tenancy Act B.C. (RTA), meaning that the landlord and tenants have specific rights in the tenancy as outlined by the RTA. Rents are at shelter rate (Table 1). Women can self-refer themselves to Cadence and a number of community partners Atira works with also refer women to Cadence. They don't carry a waiting list as there are many variables in play and it is hard to predict when they can provide housing to those who are on the list. In the event that Atira is unable to provide housing for women at Cadence, they can refer women to other housing providers or find appropriate housing for them within their own portfolio of housing.

Table 1. Rents for applicable household size

Unit type	Unit size	Income threshold	Household size	Rent
Studio	400 sf	$33,500 or less	Expectant mothers	$375
2 bedroom	740 sf	$45,500 or less	Mother + 1 child	$570
			Mother + 2 children	$660
			Mother + 3 children, if the household configuration meets the National Occupancy Standard.	$720

As a supportive housing project, Cadence offers several programs to support mothers who have fled domestic violence including coping with addiction and improving mental wellbeing. When they first come to Cadence, women have an agreement with Atira staff to work towards a recovery plan or mental wellness strategy. As part of that recovery plan, women attend life skill building and parenting workshops as well as a number of other programs Atira offers in collaboration with Vancouver Coastal Health. As long as they are working towards their goal and engaging with the staff to get there, women are able to stay in Cadence. There are currently 4 staff, a program manager and 3 support staff, responsible for the day-to-day activities at Cadence, from providing support to the women, organizing workshops and everything in between.

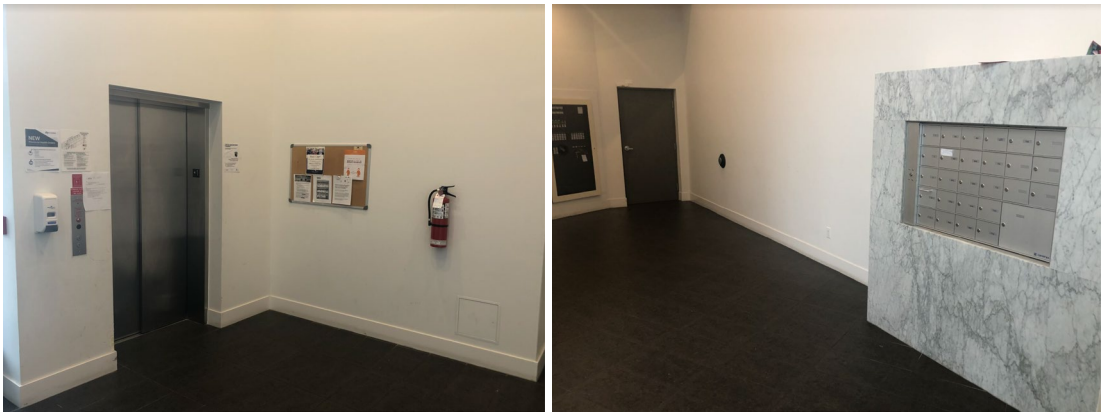
Figure 13. Cadence kids' activities schedule



Visitors are permitted to stay overnight for 2 nights per week. If the visitor is a romantic partner, their social worker needs to inform Atira staff that they are a safe

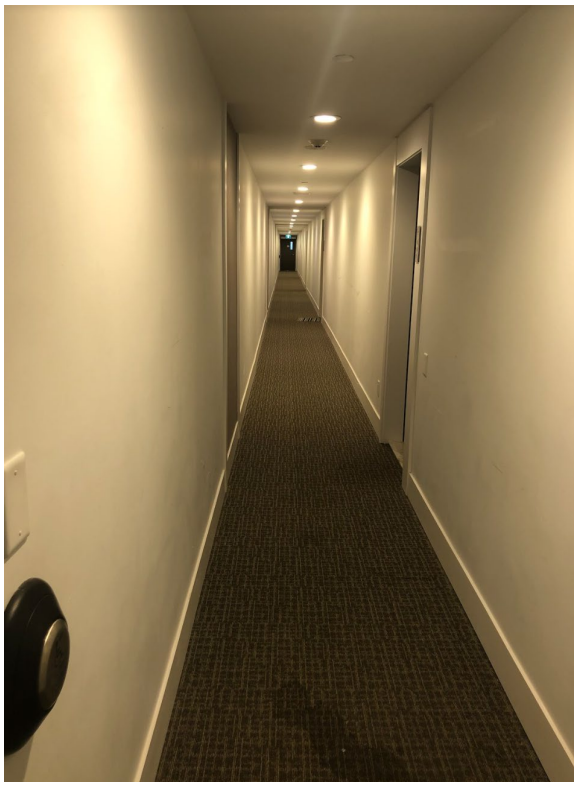
partner (Sarah Louie). Children get priority placement in the Willow Daycare and it is the only facility in Richmond's City Centre where there is an enrollment priority for a particular group. Having both the affordable housing and the childcare run by one operator, made the priority access a straightforward process (Chris Duggan).

Figure 14. Cadence lobby



Cadence is a partnership among market residential strata, commercial strata, BC Housing as the affordable housing owner, Atira Women's Resource Society as the operator of the affordable housing units and the childcare, and the City of Richmond as the owners of the daycare. It is one of the most complicated stratified projects the CoR has even embarked on. As the owners and operators of the affordable housing, neither BC Housing nor Atira is invited to have any voice on the market residential strata. However, Atira is required to respond to residential strata when they have concerns (Sarah Louie).

Figure 15. Cadence hallway leading to the affordable housing units



Chapter 5. Findings

5.1. Resident Demographics

Based on demographic information about the current affordable housing tenants provided by Atira, twelve out of 15 women (80%) have 1 child, 2 women have 2 children and one woman has 3 children. Furthermore, all the women have children under the age of 6 and 3 of them also have school-aged children.

The majority of the women are either on income assistance or on disability benefits; two of them are currently employed. The median age of current tenants is 26. Seven women are Canadian born, whereas 5 women immigrated to Canada over 10 years ago and 3 women immigrated less than 10 years ago. In terms of their ethnic background, residents include women from Caucasian, African, Asian, and Latin American backgrounds. None identify as Indigenous.

5.2. Profiles of interviewees

This section will give a summary of each interview participant's story based on how the women described in their own words the life paths that have led them to Cadence. These profiles are meant to help the reader paint a picture of each woman in terms of how their backgrounds and life-stories may have influenced their experience at Cadence, including the levels of social interaction they engaged in and sense of community they fostered.

Jennifer, 25-34

"What you put in the Universe will come back to you"

Jennifer is a Caucasian woman in her early 30s. She learned about Cadence through her social worker and has been living in Cadence for about 7 months. She moved from an apartment unit in Richmond City Centre that she could barely afford. Growing up on the streets, she never really had a family of her own but she has a close relationship with her step-dad, who is her daughter's God father. She regards herself as a very honest person. She lives with her daughter, who attends Willow daycare, and 2 pets (a cat and a dog). Her income consists of disability benefits.

Marilyn, 25-34

"There are people that care about you"

Her social worker connected her with Cadence and she moved in within 3 months. She has been living here for about a year now. Before moving to Cadence, she used to live at her in-laws' house in the Strawberry Hill area of Surrey BC. She used to work in the airline and tourism industry prior to having kids and wishes to return to school someday. She has 3 children under the age of six, and her mom visits and helps with the kids. She is currently reconciling with her husband, who visits regularly. She receives income assistance. She is in her late 20s and is an ethnic minority.

Chloe, 25-34

"Beggars can't be choosers"

She moved into Cadence from Nova House, which is a first stage housing located in Richmond, and she has been living here for about 9 months now. She didn't have to wait long to get into Cadence because she was already in first stage housing. She lives with her daughter who goes to preschool on a part-time basis. She works part-time and is a full-time student pursuing a degree in science. She was still at the shelter when she started school and she was on the honour roll this semester for the first time in her life. She has family members who provide childcare support while she attends school.

Georgia, 25-34

"My kid helped me make friends"

She moved from Surrey and has been living in Cadence for over a year now. Her social worker introduced her to Cadence but she had to wait 2 years to get in. She has a school-aged child and her mother visits and helps out. She is of African heritage and she moved to Canada when she was ten years old. She works as a care aide worker but she has been laid off due to the Covid-19.

Abby, 25-34

"We all have our own problems"

Abby is an Asian woman in her mid 30s. She moved to Cadence from Atira's Maxxine Wright Second Stage Housing in Surrey, because Cadence is closer to her family. She lived in a shelter prior to that when she fled her ex-partner. Her daughter is 15 months old and her parents visit them often. She receives income assistance, but she used to work at a seniors home prior to Covid-19.

Esther, 18-24

"Everybody is chill"

Esther learned about Cadence from a social worker when she was pregnant. She used to live in a low-income housing in Richmond. She had to wait 6 months to move in and she has been living here for about 9 months now. She emigrated from Africa 9 years ago and doesn't have family members in B.C. She used to work in food services before having a child. She is on income assistance. She is currently in a newish relationship.

Dawn, 35-44

"When we are moms, big possibilities come to us because we are doing such a great job."

She has been living in Cadence for 3 years and considers herself as part of the "old" generation of Cadence women. She moved to Canada 12 years ago and does not have family in Canada. She was in Nova House prior to Cadence, and her son was 6 months old when she moved into Cadence. She used to work as a fashion designer assistant, but it was no longer doable as a single mother. She is studying towards a diploma in Business Management, while her son attends Willow Daycare on a full-time basis.

5.3. Cadence as a Master Planned Community

In this section, I present the key findings of my research in terms of how Cadence works as a master planned community for the residents. This section is broken down into three subsections that summarize the findings as they relate to the importance

of transit-oriented development and walkability, access to services and amenities, and access to affordable housing.

5.3.1. Transit-Oriented Development & Neighbourhood Walkability

Survey findings revealed that 80 percent of the respondents considered the access to public transportation as an important feature (Table 2), but only 30 percent of the respondents indicated that they rely on public transportation to get around (Table 3). None of the women who participated in the phone interviews relied heavily on public transportation to get around and most of them owned a car or had one at their disposal. One woman I interviewed talked about how some of her friends in Cadence, who now have moved out, used to let her use their cars when she needed to get to an appointment or run an errand (Dawn). During our interview, Abby indicated that her parents are now able to visit them often because of the close proximity of Canada Line to Cadence.

Table 2. Please tell me the importance of the following features to you. (n=10)

	Not at all important	Not important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Very Important
Access to affordable housing					10
Personal safety and safety of my children					10
Good quality housing				2	8
Sense of community			1	2	7
Neighbourhood walkability				4	6
Quality landlord				4	6
Cleanliness				4	6
Access to shops, services and amenities in the neighbourhood			1	3	6
Security of tenure (no eviction, etc)			1	3	6
Access to public transportation			2	2	6
Friendly people in the neighbourhood			2	2	6
Good neighbourhood				5	5
Onsite daycare			2	3	5

Table 3. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (n=10)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe living in this building	5	3	2		
I feel welcome in my community and feel like I belong here	3	5	2		
Quality of housing is adequate	5	1	3	1	
I mostly rely on public transportation to get around	2	1	3	1	3
I have issues with my neighbours	1	1	3	1	4
Cadence is too far from friends and family			2	4	4
I can't access necessary services nearby				4	6

Cadence women are able to meet their day-to-day needs within the neighbourhood by walking. All respondents felt that they can access necessary services within the neighbourhood (Table 3), and neighbourhood walkability was considered as an important feature for the respondents (Table 2). These findings show that these women, in spite of their immediate and urgent need for safe and secure housing they can afford for themselves and their children, demonstrate an interest in the complete community features of the neighbourhood that Cadence sits in.

5.3.2. Access to services and amenities

During the phone interviews, frequent references were given to the convenience of being in the centre of everything, whether this was the parks, shops, or amenities as the women's favourite aspect of living in Cadence. Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents ranked access to shops and amenities in the neighbourhood as an important feature (Table 2). Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that they visit the drug stores and grocery stores at least once a week. The majority of respondents also indicated that they use the neighbourhood parks and trails (80%) as well as cafes and restaurants (60%) on a weekly basis.

> "The location is awesome. It is in the middle of everything even if you don't have a car to get around. It is a beautiful location." (Marilyn)

> "The neighbourhood is good. Very convenient for me….(and) my family and mom to visit me." (Abby)

> "Everything is close. Shops are close. Parks are close, gym is close... The neighbourhood is very nice. It's presentable." (Esther)

The aesthetics of the Oval Village is also something the tenants seem to appreciate. As illustrated in the quotes above, my interview participants describes the neighbourhood in terms such as “beautiful”, and “presentable”. Often, affordable housing or low-income housing locations are synonymous with run-down housing and neighbourhoods. As Sarah Louie pointed out, people deserve to live in quality housing regardless of their income.

Furthermore, seventy percent of the respondents indicated that they never visited the City Centre Community Centre which is less than 10 minutes walking distance away (Table 4). When asked why she never visits the community centre, Esther said that there is nothing for her there that she cannot already get at Cadence. Due to the existing support program available at Cadence, including recreational programs for kids and mothers, they may not have the need to go to the community centre, which would explain why a majority of the tenants never visit the community centre.

All survey respondents had 1 or more children under the age of 6, and on-site daycare was considered to be an important feature for 80 percent of the respondents (Table 2). Sixty percent of the participants used the facility on weekly basis at minimum with 20 percent of the respondents using the daycare daily (Table 4). Given that Cadence women would qualify for the Affordable Childcare Benefit that would fully cover the cost of full-time childcare, it is surprising that only 2 people use the childcare daily and 4 people never used the facility. Half of the respondents indicated that they visit the roof-top garden at least once a week (Table 4).

Table 4. In the six months before public health directive to stay at home, how often did you use the following spaces in your building and neighbourhood surrounding Cadence? (n=10)

	Daily	2-3 times/ week	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Grocery store	3	4	1	2	
Drug store	2	3	3	1	1
Parks and trails nearby	2	3	3	1	1
Childcare	2	2	2		4
Cafes and restaurants		3	3	2	2
Roof-top garden		3	2	4	1
City Centre Community Centre			3		7

5.3.3. Access to Affordable Housing

All respondents ranked access to affordable housing as a very important feature and 80 percent of the respondents said that having security of tenure is important (Table 2). This point was also echoed by Sarah Louie during our conservation who felt that women at Cadence appreciated the access to affordable housing the most among other factors like easy access to public transportation or priority access for childcare. Having a home that they could afford meant that women are able to provide comfortably for their children. During my phone interview with Jennifer, she talked about how she would be left with $40 every month after paying her rent for her previous home, which made it hard for her to feed her daughter. Personal safety and safety of their children were considered very important features to all respondents and 80 percent of the respondents felt safe living in Cadence (Table 2). Additionally, interview participants expressed how having a home that they could afford provided stability in their lives that they desperately needed.

> "I get child tax [benefit] every month and my child tax basically pays off my rent. So its like, I always know that I am going to have a roof over my head and the stability for my daughter. Because obviously, jumping around, like sort of being homeless and then living at the shelter was really hectic. It made our lives so much better and all the issues that (my daughter) was going through sort of ironed out because we had that stability and the roof over our head." (Chloe)

> "You know how hard is it to rent a place and keep food on the table for your kid and your pets? I am grateful to be living in Cadence. I wish I never have to leave. In Cadence, I have money left over and I am able to provide comfortably for my children and family. I got out of debt last year and it was a very liberating feeling. Cadence has definitely helped me grow in a good way." (Jennifer)

The struggle to transition to Community Housing

Many of the interview participants expressed concern over having to leave Cadence after 2 years. The Province created a 2-year term for second stage housing with an expectation that BC Housing would offer them low-income subsidized housing in the neighbourhood. However, in reality, BC Housing has been unable to fulfil that commitment and women are staying longer than 2 years if they can't find suitable subsidized housing within the BC Housing program. As of 2019, there are 825 households in Richmond waiting for subsidized housing units from BC Housing with an average wait time of five to seven years (AHS Update, 2019, p 5).

Although some women have been proactive in signing up for subsidized housing waitlists, Sarah Louie has indicated that only 20 percent of their tenants have been invited to first showings for subsidized housing through BC Housing and only 1-2 of those ended up being housed there. Atira has a commitment not ever to "un-house" women and children so they allow women and children to stay longer if they need more time to safely transition to community housing (Sarah Louie).

> "I am concerned about moving out after 2 years. I am hoping that I would get into BC Housing like subsidized housing by the time I have to leave. I am on the waitlist." (Esther)

> "At first, I was concerned about moving out at the end of my 2-year term. Now I already started to look for new housing. I got short listed for a low-income apartment unit my social worker sent me. Hopefully, I will be out sooner. I almost hate to leave because I got so comfortable here. But I think if I have the opportunity to leave, I will leave to open the space up." (Chloe)

For some, finding housing that they could afford is a constant struggle. As single parents with limited income, these women are not the most attractive or reliable tenants in the eyes of landlords. This is further exacerbated by high demand for rental housing, low vacancy rates and high rental costs that are prevalent across the Lower Mainland. Looking for apartments also takes away from their time the women could use to earn a living, study, or spend quality time with their children. Cadence staff have been providing support to these women in securing housing, from providing reference letters to taking care of the children while the mothers go and see apartments.

> "I have been applying for places for the last year and a half, but I haven't been able to get anything. Because my situation is not very attractive – I am a single mom and a student. I guess that is why I don't get the apartment. Every weekend, I go and see 2-3 and apply for 1-2 apartments. But there is just nothing for me." (Dawn)

> "Every week, seeing apartments takes away from my time to study you know. I have to book an appointment, go see a place and of course, you can't just go in your pjs. You have to look presentable. I definitely want to move out and not waste 3-4 hours every week." (Dawn)

This shows that this need to constantly search for different apartments prevents Cadence women from putting down their roots in a place where they appear to have a strong sense of appreciation of what they have.

The Guilt

Although these women express concern over having to move out at some point, they also acknowledge that there are other people who might be needing the space more than they do now.

> "There is a 2-year term and after that you have to leave. I have about like a year left. But still, you know, it's like you make it your home but then you have to leave. But you have to think about there is other people that need this too and that they probably need it more." (Marilyn)

> "One of the reasons I really want to move out is because I feel a little bit guilty that there might be another single mom in my shoes right now, in the shoe that I was wearing 3 years ago. She might be needing this spot very badly. I don't need it as much, right now." (Dawn)

This expression of guilt in feeling a sense of belonging and at home in this amenity-rich neighbourhood showcases that these women have yet to experience the same level of sense of belonging or community they feel at Cadence elsewhere.

5.4. Cadence as a Venue for Social Interaction & Sense of Community

In this section, I summarize my research findings in terms of how Cadence works as a venue for social interaction and for promoting sense of community among residents. I discuss interactions among the affordable housing tenants, interactions with the market housing tenants as well as key findings related to sense of community at Cadence in turn in the following subsections.

5.4.1. Interactions amongst Affordable Housing Tenants

Casual Encounters & Weak Ties

All the women who took the survey knew at least 1 neighbour on a first name basis; 2 women knew the names of 6 or more of their neighbours. All but one woman indicated that they stop and chat with at least 1 of their immediate neighbours (i.e. people on the same floor) and are comfortable borrowing household items from their neighbours (Table 5). These findings are similar to, if not better than what Vancouver Foundation found among residents across Metro Vancouver. In Metro Vancouver, 88 percent of the residents know at least one neighbour by name and 79 percent know at

least one neighbour that they are comfortable asking for help (Vancouver Foundation, 2017, p.15). The elevator, building entrance and lobby were where most interactions took place (Table 6).

Table 5. Please answer the following questions about how well you know your neighbours. (n=10)

	0	1-3	4-6	More than 6
How many of your neighbours do you know on first name basis?		5	3	2
How many of your immediate neighbours (people on the same floor) do you typically stop and chat with when you run into them? Could be anything from "hello, how are you?" to more significant chats.	1	6	2	1
How many of your neighbours do you feel comfortable borrowing a small household item?	1	7	1	1
How many of your neighbours do you consider friends? (people who are not your relatives, but who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind or call on for help).	3	6	1	
How many of your neighbours do you feel comfortable asking to care for your child in times of need?	4	6		
How many of your neighbours could you talk to if you had a crisis?	3	7		

When asked to describe their interactions with their neighbours, interview participants said that their encounters are generally brief but positive. Sarah Louie also felt that women have positive interactions with each other and have a community. Cadence women would always say hello and smile at each other when they run into each other. Some attributed their personal characters as the reason for not engaging in deeper conversations.

> ”When I run into someone in the elevator or downstairs in the lobby, I just say hi. But I don’t usually stop and talk because I am not a talkative person. I am kind of like a quiet person.” (Abby)

> “I personally try to keep to myself as much as possible. But I am not unfriendly. I am definitely cordial, and I feel that everybody is cordial. You will just say “hi” and smile.” (Chloe)

> “It took me a while to make friends when I first moved to Cadence. But we would always say hi and smile at each other. And the kids always interact with each other no matter what. My kid helped me make friends.” (Georgia)

Table 6. Where do you usually interact with your neighbours? Please check all that apply.

Elevator	7
Building entrance	5
Mailroom/ lobby	5
Neighbourhood services and amenities	3
Parking	3
6F roof top garden	2
Childcare - Willow	1
Staircase	1

Mutual Support & Strong Ties

Despite the fact that all participants knew their neighbours and have positive social relationships with each other, about one-third of the respondents said that they consider none of their neighbours as friends and feel that they don't have anyone in the building they could talk to if they had a personal crisis (Table 5). Furthermore, 40 percent of the respondents expressed no desire to know more people in their building (Table 7). Respondents felt that social distancing was more important at the time of survey (6), followed by a preference to maintain their privacy (4) and not feeling like they have enough time (2) as reasons for not wanting to know more people in the neighbourhood (Table 8).

> "We usually say hi or go over to each other's houses when we need stuff. I am comfortable talking to my neighbours (but) I would say they are my acquaintances, not friends." (Georgia)

> "I have made one or two friends since moving to cadence. We connect through Facebook but we are not really hangout buddies." (Abby)

Table 7. Do you wish that you know more people in your building or in your neighbourhood? (n=10)

Yes	4
No	6

For women who have people they consider as their friends, some expressed reluctance towards sharing personal issues with them. They feel more comfortable

talking to the staff about their concerns or keep to themselves. During my phone conservations with the women, it became clear that they prefer to keep to themselves in order to avoid unnecessary drama and keep their relationships pleasant without getting too involved with others in the building. As Cadence is the first second stage housing in Richmond, Atira was initially committed to supporting women who grew up in Richmond. However, Sarah found that a lot of the women knew each other and that was not necessarily positive. In some cases, women got into conflict with each other and got caught up in the drama of it (Sarah Louie).

Table 8. What makes you not want to get to know your neighbours better? Please check all that apply.

Currently, social distancing is more important.	6
I prefer to maintain privacy.	4
I do not feel like I have enough time.	2
The building/ my neighbours are unfriendly.	2
I already spend a lot of time with my neighbours.	1
I already have enough friends.	1
I do not have anything important to offer	0

Women are aware that everybody is going through different stages in their lives and taking different time to heal or recover from what they have been through. They respect others' boundaries and the onsite staff offers them a safe place to talk about their feelings and seek help as issues arise. On the other hand, knowing that they are expected to stay no more than 2 years, women are less likely to be motivated to invest their time and effort in building relationships with each other.

> "I have two neighbours on my floor that I love very much. I don't spend as much time with them as I used to because I feel like I am safer by myself. If they reach out, I would definitely talk to them or help them out if they need it. I am realizing that the only person I can trust is myself and the staff. Because when someone has a bad day, atomic bombs can blow up at your face." (Jennifer)

> "I try not to be friends with too many people. Because in my building, a lot of the women don't work, so I feel that it's just a lot of unnecessary drama because people are not working. I try not to get involved as much as possible because I don't want to worry about my mental health." (Chloe)

> "If I have any issues, I talk to the staff first. I know we all have our own problems and I don't want to involve them in the things I am going through. So I don't really talk to my friends about my problems. Staff is very helpful in listening to my concerns and issues." (Abby)

> "I just find that every woman in this building has their own issues, own personal issues. And sometimes those hurtful issues are brought up in the friendship and because someone is having a bad day, they take it out on someone who cares the most … So now when I interact with any women in the building, I am very cautious and careful." (Jennifer)

These quotes cast the meaning of neighborliness and friendship in a new light, for these residents who share a violent history and a present situation that makes them commonly vulnerable – and where this means that sometimes the strongest expression of caring for one another is not to attempt to engage one another too deeply.

When asked whether they have done favours for their neighbours or their neighbours have done anything nice for them, all had positive things to say. Mutual support included gestures such as taking out each others' garbage, borrowing things from one another, watching their kids (and pets) while their neighbours run an errand. All women expressed that they are ready to help others in the building with what they can. Women feel that they share similar stories and are able to relate to each other which ultimately enables them to depend on one another for support.

> "There were many things that we shared with each other. Things that we would never share with other people because they may never understand. We shared a lot of information with each other because we were helping each other out. We share a deep emotional connection. We all knew each other's stories, so we knew what kind of support we needed. Whether it is calling the cops or helping with the baby. Things like that." (Dawn)

> "Just like things like taking each other's garbage, borrowing things from one another, if someone is cooking, we kind of like share the food." (Marilyn)

> "I would always watch (my friend's) son for her because she has hard time sometimes. She has illness that makes her unable to take care of her son sometimes. I love her son….I helped the new lady when her son was constipated. I showed her all my tricks on how to get him to burp, and pass gas…I threw my neighbour's garbage away. I watched my neighbour's cat when she was not going to be home for a while. I cooked for some of my neighbours." (Jennifer)

Annoyance & Negative Social Interactions

Some respondents feel that their neighbours are unfriendly (20%) (Table 8) and 70 percent of the respondents feel annoyed by the behaviours of their neighbours to varying degrees (Table 9). Noise, improper garbage disposal, dirty common areas, drug use and questionable visitors to the building were most commonly stated as the cause of their annoyance.

> "At first, I was a little bit shaken up. Just because there are people who do drugs in the building. There are ladies who bring in random men in the building and they were doing drugs in the hallway. People were being strung out in the stairwell – so there were shit, piss and puke. Obviously, I don't like that… I wished that random men were not coming here to do drugs." (Chloe)

In some cases, stepping over personal boundaries also caused annoyance for some. Disclosing too much information about themselves or their circumstances led to conflict with others.

Table 9. How often do you feel annoyed or disturbed by the behaviours of your neighbours? (n=10)

Always	0
Often	1
Sometimes	5
Seldom	1
Never	3

> "My next door neighbour is just ….really annoying. (She would) call me, and then text me …. all day, and she would get mad when I didn't pick up or text her back and she will come knocking on my door and sometimes she would even open my door when I am doing something at home and I felt really uncomfortable. So we then kind of talked about it and now things are sorted out." (Marilyn)

Formal Encounters & Community Participation

Although only 30 percent of the respondents participate in the programs organized by Atira on a regular basis (Table 10), 90 percent of women felt that these programs provide opportunities for social interactions (Table 11). Most of them attend kids' and family activities so that their children can participate in the program and the women can spend time with others. On the other hand, those with very young children

don't see the value in attending kids' programs and those who attend school or have job, stated that they don't have the time to attend the on-site programs. Regardless, all women attend the mandatory monthly meetings and on-site food bank regularly.

> "Sometimes, it does get lonely. Obviously, I wasn't seeing my husband at that time. Just having activity where there are people there, and see other people there, kind of makes you feel like a sense of belonging and it kind of reminds you that there are people that care about you." (Marilyn)

> "I mostly go to kids programs so that I can spend time with other people and she can spend time with other kids as well." (Esther)

Table 10. How often do you participate in the onsite programs organized by Atira? (n=10)

Always	2
Often	1
Sometimes	5
Seldom	1
Never	1

Table 11. Do you think that these programs provide opportunities for you to interact with your neighbours?

Yes	9
No	1

5.4.2. Interactions with Market Housing Residents

Most of the women I had interviews with had very little interactions with people from the towers. Chloe noted that a majority of the residents in the towers are of Asian heritage and that she wouldn't normally interact with them. Furthermore, they felt that they are "very separated from the people in the towers" (Dawn) physically and they don't run into them or have the opportunity to interact with them on regular basis. Despite the lack of social interaction with the tower residents, women in Cadence view them as nice and polite people, who are there if they needed any help.

> "I don't have really too much of interaction with them. I know they are there. There was one time that I forgot my fob. I went in the parkade and I was stuck. I didn't have my phone or anything. This guy he like

> really helped me out. He called concierge for me and the concierge guy came and let me into the building." (Marilyn)

None of the women expressed desire for more interaction with the tower residents and they felt that the tower residents want to have nothing to do with them, knowing they are in second stage housing.

5.4.3. Sense of Community

Role of Staff

Ninety percent of the survey respondents feel a sense of community in Cadence (Table 12). Based on the Vancouver Foundation research, approximately 64 percent of Metro Vancouver residents reported a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. Their findings also suggested that low income people (51%), unemployed people (54%) and people who have lived in Canada for 10 years or less (46%) are less likely to feel welcome in their community (Vancouver Foundation, 2017, p.14). Considering that Cadence women would fall into one or more of these three sub-groups of people who are more likely to feel unwelcome in their neighbourhood, my research finding is quite a positive result.

Table 12. Do you feel that you have a sense of community with your neighbours in Cadence? (n=10)

Yes	9
No	1

When asked to elaborate on why they feel that way, many women referenced the support they receive from Cadence staff as a positive factor to their feeling of belonging.

> "I really believe that they (staff) try really hard to make the women feel appreciated, loved and heard. On Mother's Day, they gave us roses and a card of course. They made breakfast and lunch. They bring little gifts for us and our children when we were having a rough week. They definitely show that they care….When I was having a mental breakdown and I screamed and yelled at them, they didn't once get mad at me, yell or scream at me. They just listened to my concern, with a calm and caring voice they said, we would really appreciate if you do reach out to us so that we know that you are ok but if you need your space, we understand. I am used to people yelling back at me. That kind of put

me on a loop. But you know, like, it's like they have a sense. They know something is wrong. They call you or they text you like: hey, how is it going?" (Jennifer)

"When I just moved in, they didn't have the support programs here initially. But the program manager was very close to me. She took me to the court many times, drove us to find diapers for my son. They felt like my family at that moment. I could not express how grateful I am…I do feel that the staff have become very close to me. They are here everyday and they have supported me in different situations. I feel the support from the staff, they are always nice, always giv e you a hand if you need to. They feel like they are like my little family. I came to Cadence when I was in a vulnerable stage and Cadence became my family and support." (Dawn)

On the other hand, some do feel that the staff are hard to relate to because they are mostly younger than them and are not parents themselves.

"Not to be rude to women who work here because they are all great and they are super nice and they do want to help. But I am 27 and I feel like they are quite a bit younger than me. It is sort of really hard for them to emphasize or maybe have a connection because most of them are super young, don't have kids and they probably still live with their parents. What can they really give me?" (Chloe)

I don't belong here

As Cadence is second-stage housing, not all women felt that they belong there, and it is not because of their neighbours or staff. Women acknowledged that they never planned on being a single parent or a victim of domestic violence and that it was never in their life plans to go through transitional housing.

"So, I feel like I don't belong here personally. But I have always felt that way and it's not because of the people here at Cadence. I just hate to think I had to be in stage one and two. Obviously, I had to and I am grateful that it was there. But I don't want to be on income assistance or anything like that. That is why I am in school and getting the help I can get to get myself out of it. So that's why I don't feel like I belong in Cadence." (Chloe)

For some, like in the case of Dawn, she no longer feels sense of community at Cadence as she is a part of the first-generation residents at Cadence and a majority of the friends she had at Cadence had already left. Because women at Cadence are all going through different stages in their lives, it is harder to establish friendship among women of different cycles of Cadence residents. In contrast, Sarah felt that women can

benefit from building community with others who are further along in their recovery and use their peers to recover from their trauma.

> "I was one of the very first people who moved in and I am part of the old generation and the other girls who moved in at the same time as I did moved out already… And I am not really part of the new group anymore. I am busy with school and busy with life. And I am also not emotionally recovering as they are right now…(so) I don't feel like I am part of the community with my neighbours anymore. They kind of know who I am and I know their faces and kids. But I don't talk to them or have friendship with them." (Dawn)

5.5. Cadence as a Mixed-Income Housing

In this section, I present my findings related to how Cadence works as a mixed-income housing development. I summarized research participants' thoughts on mixed-income housing in general and attempted to illustrate the role of built environment such as shared amenity spaces in promoting social interaction among people from different income groups.

5.5.1. Dilemma with shared spaces & role of children

New Urbanism principles advocate for shared spaces in mixed-income development to promote social integration and opportunities for interaction among people from different social backgrounds. In Cadence, a majority of the survey respondents indicated that they use the roof-top garden on a regular basis or at least once a month, but the space never served as a place for the people from the two types of residences to socialize or "integrate." During the phone interviews, I specifically asked the women if they visit the roof-top garden and if so, whether they have interacted with people from the towers while being there. None of the women interacted with anyone while they were in the garden.

> "Garden, yes. We have been there. Never really interacted with people there." (Dawn)

> "I was out on the roof top garden. I walk around the garden when the weather is nice. I usually go there in the evening time so maybe that's why I don't see many people there." (Abby)

Some women felt hyper-surveilled and unwelcomed when they are on the roof-top garden. The concierge would sneak around and videotape the women and send the

videotapes to Sarah Louie with no context, implying blame around how the affordable housing tenants were making the development unsafe for everybody. The Willow childcare staff was also videotaped on one occasion while picking up a toy that was thrown over the garden fence. The tape was sent to the Sarah and Chris, with no context with strong accusatory tone (Chris Duggan). Furthermore, women who tried to rent the amenity room on the roof-top garden from the Strata manager said that they felt looked down upon and felt that the Strata manager thinks that they are not going to be able to afford it.

> "My son played on the roof top garden once. It's nice. Didn't talk to people there. I don't think people use it often because when kids play in the garden, people complain to the manager. When my son was playing in the little pond, people from the other building called the manager and the manager told us that we can't play there. (My son) was just playing in the water with the rocks. It is not like he was making the water dirty. So we don't go there anymore." (Georgia)

On the other hand, parking spaces seem to provide more opportunities for people to interact with each other through repetitive encounters that parking spaces allow for. In the survey, when asked about where they usually interact with their neighbours, the parking was selected 3 times, and the garden was selected 2 times, suggesting that parking spaces serve as a better place to interact and socialize with others than the roof-top garden. Furthermore, these frequent interactions that take place in parking lots are facilitated by the presence of children, who act as social bridge for the parents. Some even acknowledged that they only interact with people from the other side because they have children as well. Their interactions would revolve around their children and their families and these frequent contacts with the market housing residents enables them to feel welcome in their broader community.

> "We have interacted with people from the other side in the parking lot. We have a couple of friends, who we call our "parking lot friends". They are very nice and they have kids as well. The kids are a little bit bigger. We say "hi" and ask how their family is doing." (Dawn)

> "I only interacted with one family because they have kids. They were a mixed family. Mom is Asian and the man was African American, I believe. They were really friendly, just saying "hi". They park right across from me, so I see them quite often." (Chloe)

5.5.2. On mixed-income housing

When asked about their thoughts on mixed-income housing like Cadence, many expressed gratitude towards having a home that they could comfortably afford in a nice neighbourhood. For Cadence women, living in one building provided opportunities for them to connect with each other and the women were able to comfortably share their stories with each other and help each other out in times of need.

> "In my case, I needed a safe place. I was grateful that all my neighbours knew my situation and they could call the police for me. I was not going to have the same support in a different place if I needed it. I am not going to go neighbour by neighbour telling, "oh if something happens, call the police", you know. It just doesn't happen like that. Because we had that group support, knew each other's' stories, and built a friendship with each other, we could support each other easily. In my case, it was very comforting especially with a baby." (Dawn)

Women did feel segregated and felt that people view them differently because they lived in a certain part of the development. My conversations with the women revealed that they are embarrassed about the state of their side, like litter around the building, and leaking cars in the parking area. Women feel that they are judged or looked down upon because of this disorder. On the other hand, Chloe acknowledged that her feeling of segregation is not specific to Cadence itself and that she would still feel segregated if she were in government subsidized housing where people would still know it is for low-income households.

> "I feel like they know we are second stage place and I sort of feel bad because I think there has been a lot of break-ins in the cars due to those ladies who were bringing in these random men. Honestly, our side is not as well kept. Like parking spots, people's cars are leaking, they leave their rubbish there. So I think people know we are like second stage home. They don't interact with us very often. If I were them, I would also be annoyed." (Chloe)

> "I do feel segregated. But if you also just put us in a separate building like a government co-op or low income, it doesn't matter. People would still know it is for low income people. I think it might just also be my mentality … Because it is not necessarily the place I want to be in, you know what I mean." (Chloe)

During my conversation with Dawn, she talked about how some of her friends from the older generation of Cadence women used to say that they feel segregated living in Cadence. The commonalities across their friends' circumstances were that they

had school-aged children who are aware of their environment and situation. In her circumstance, her son is still young and is "just happy wherever. They just need their parents to be happy. If we are happy, they are happy" (Dawn). She was quick to point out that she does not take the judgemental looks from the market housing residents or the community members personally, acknowledging that fact that Cadence women's lives are slightly different from the mainstream or middle class.

> Now I think about it, I see a pattern. I think they felt that way because most of them had bigger kids. Like 7 or 8. Kids that already know what is happening. And they are like " Why do we live here", "Why can't we go to the other side?" and I feel that that is why they feel more pressured and segregated …and maybe ashamed that they can't explain to their children why they live in this part of the building. (Dawn)

When asked about her opinion about mixed-income housing, Sarah noted that women can't feel a part of an inclusive community as a whole if they are only allowed to go to certain areas or when they are constantly looked down upon or video taped when they are on the roof-top garden or in common areas of the complex. My interviews with the tenants and Sarah Louie revealed that the residential strata restricted the access to the clubhouse for the affordable housing tenants even though the housing agreement says that the affordable housing tenants will have full and unlimited access to and use of all amenity spaces, both outdoor and indoor, in the complex, including the clubhouse.

Because of the significant income disparity, and severe lack of understanding of or interest in affordable housing, Sarah feels that there is a lot of ego and entitlement on the market housing side. Consequently, in the first 1.5 years of the program, she constantly had to deal with tenants being recorded or confronted or accused of things that were going on in the development. The amount of negative discourse Cadence was getting from the market housing residents ultimately led to Sarah hiring a separate property manager. Now, the residential strata members and the concierge can no longer contact Cadence staff directly – they have to go through the property manager. The residential strata also has a newer concierge and they were able to set very clear boundaries and expectations and their relationship has improved since then (Sarah Louie).

Chapter 6. Discussion

6.1. Master Planned Community Design

For low-income households, access to local services and amenities is especially important for their day-to-day life as they are often constrained by lack of economic resources to access services that are located further away. Local facilities and amenities, such as shops, day care centers, gyms, schools, playgrounds, and parks, also offer opportunities for social interaction through everyday encounters (Tersteeg & Pinkster, 2016, p.757).

My study findings revealed that women appreciate the complete and compact community features of the neighbourhood that Cadence sits in. A frequent reference was given to the convenience of being in the centre of everything, whether this was the parks, shops or amenities as the women's favourite aspect of living in Cadence. Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents ranked access to shops and amenities in the neighbourhood as an important feature (Table 2) and 80 percent of the respondents indicated that they visit the drug store and grocery stores at least once a week. The majority of respondents also indicated that they use the neighbourhood parks and trails (80%) as well as cafes and restaurants (60%) on a weekly basis (Table 4).

Cadence is the only development in Richmond where the affordable housing tenants get priority placement in the on-site daycare. Cadence women appreciate the access to the daycare and considered it to be an important feature (Table 2). Sixty percent of the participants use the facility on weekly basis at a minimum and 20 percent of the respondents use the daycare daily (Table 2).The priority access to the childcare provides opportunities for the women to attend school, maintain a stable job and attend life skill building workshops that are important for them to improve their lives. However, it is surprising that 40 percent of the respondents never used the childcare despite being eligible for the Affordable Childcare Benefit program that helps with the full cost of childcare for a full-time enrollment (Table 4). On the other hand, these women who are healing and recovering from trauma, may feel safer having their children close to themselves.

Master planned communities often get criticized for catering to the growing "lifestyle consumerism" of the middle-class (Rosenbaum et al., 2012, p.128), where local services and institutions can mostly represent the sociocultural interest of residents with higher levels of financial and cultural capital (Zukin, 2010). Previous studies have found that neighbourhood shops and amenities had no value for the low-income households, ultimately leading them to commute to the other parts of the city for more affordable and suitable options (Zukin, 2010, p.771). Based on my research findings, this did not appear to be the case for Cadence. Despite having a significant portion of services in the neighbourhood targeted towards people from Asian descent, all survey respondents, none who identify as Asian, felt that they can access necessary services within their immediate neighbourhood (Table 3).

Cadence women are able to meet their day-to-day needs within the neighbourhood by walking and the neighbourhood walkability was considered as an important feature by the respondents (Table 2). Survey findings revealed that 80 percent of the respondents considered access to public transportation as an important feature (Table 2) although only one-third of the respondents indicated that they rely on public transportation to get around (Table 3). None of the women who participated in the phone interviews relied heavily on public transportation to get around and most of them owned a car or had one at their disposal.

On the other hand, 70 percent of the survey respondents indicated that they never visited the City Centre Community Centre which is less than 10 minutes walking distance away (Table 4). Due to the existing support and recreational programs available to the women and their children at Cadence, they did not have the need to go to the community centre to access such services. While this was not raised during the interview or the survey, women may have potentially felt unwelcomed or feared social stigma when visiting the Centre.

All women felt that their safety was a very important feature to them (Table 2). Health outcomes of moving to better neighbourhoods for adults is reported to be most striking based on self-reported health status. The existing research findings reported improved health and higher levels of "calmness and peacefulness" among adults due to reduction in anxiety from moving to safer neighbourhoods (Katz et al., 2003, p.183-196). Residing in a safe neighbourhood, these women may potentially benefit from positive

health outcome which could positively influence their children's development in the long run.

As a master planned community, Cadence was successful in delivering New Urbanism design features such as walkable, transit-oriented, and mixed use that are aimed at "putting people closer together and getting them out on the streets and mingling in shopping areas close to their place of residences" to promote a sense of attachment to the neighbourhood. However, the extent to which these features promote street-level social interaction among residents is questionable. None of my interview participants said that they interact with others in the neighbourhood while being in and around Cadence. When I asked if there were any particular reasons for not engaging in conversations, the common response was "It just never happened". During my conversation with Sarah Louie, she expressed her concern around women being blamed for things, like broken windows, stolen bicycles or littering, happening in and around Cadence. Knowing that the fingers are always going to point at them, women may not be inclined to socially engage with the rest of the community.

In conclusion, the affordable housing tenants in Cadence do benefit from and appreciate the New Urbanism design features of the neighbourhood and the development but these features do not necessarily promote opportunities for these women to interact with the broader community members. This finding is similar to the findings of a study done by Rosenblatt et al., (2009, p.138), that a master planned community is successful in delivering a "special place" that is aesthetically pleasing, where residents feel at home, but not successful in influencing residents' patterns of social interaction.

6.2. Social Interactions in a Master Planned Community

There are different levels of social contact when people engage with others. People can give each other practical help or emotional support or their relationship can be limited to saying hellos. In his theory of the "Strength of weak ties", Granovetter (1973) classified impersonal ties based on their strength into strong, weak and absent. The strength of a tie depends on a combination of factors such as the amount of time, emotional intensity, and intimacy (Granovetter, 1973, p.1361). Strong ties are formed among friends and family networks that foster feelings of caring for one another,

whereas the weak ties work to bridge these intimate networks of people in a neighbourhood.

An earlier study has found that weak ties are easier to establish as they lack the intimacy that is required to develop friendship and they are also easier to maintain due to frequent but brief contact (Henning & Lieberg, 2007p.22). This was confirmed by my research findings. When asked to describe their interactions with their immediate neighbours, many Cadence women said that their encounters are generally brief but positive. People in the building would always say hello and smile at each other when they run into each other. All the women who took the survey knew at least one neighbour on a first name basis (Table 5). A similar finding was observed across Metro Vancouver, where 88 percent of the participants reported to know at least one neighbour by name (Vancouver Foundation, 2017, p.15).

Over two-third of the respondents felt that they have friends in their neighbourhood that they can rely on for help. This is consistent with what Henning and Lieberg (2007) found about low-income residents having significant portion of their strong ties tied to their immediate neighbourhood. On the other hand, 30 percent of the respondents said that they consider none of their neighbours as friends and feel that they don't have anyone in the building they could talk to if they had a personal crisis (Table 5). This finding is similar to what we experience regionally as well. In Metro Vancouver, 79 percent of the participants in the Connect & Engage survey reported having neighbours whom they can count on for help (Vancouver Foundation, 2017, p.16). However, forty percent of the respondents expressed no desire to know more people in their building (Table 8). Cadence women had a preference to maintain their privacy and not feeling like they have enough time as reasons for not wanting to know more people in the neighbourhood (Table 8). These findings were echoed across Metro Vancouver where 32 percent of the people preferred to keep their privacy and 13 percent felt that they lacked the time to get to know their neighbours better (Vancouver Foundation, 2017, p.16). As my research was conducted during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, more than half of the survey participants felt that social distancing was more important as the reason for not engaging with others in the neighbourhood (Table 8).

When we talk about social interaction, we also have to touch on the negative ones. Ebbesen et al (1976) found that the majority of the reasons for disliking someone

resided in the actions directed towards the environment; the “environment-spoiling” hypothesis. I found that Cadence women were often annoyed by activities such as noise, improper garbage disposal, dirty common areas, drug use and questionable visitors to the building, and it supports Ebbesen et al’s hypothesis. On the other hand, in some cases, stepping over personal boundaries also caused annoyance for the other person. Disclosing too much information about themselves or their circumstances led to conflict with others, similar to the findings in earlier studies done by Zaff and Devlin (1998).

A sense of mutual aid was apparent among Cadence women. All women expressed that they are ready to help others in the building with what they can. According to Skjæveland et al, when there is a sense of mutual aid, or a belief that help is potentially available when needed, neighbours regard each other positively even when there is little social interaction that occurred (1996, p.417-418). Women feel that they share similar stories and are able to relate to each other which ultimately enables them to depend on one another for support.

Researchers have determined that participation in community activities provides opportunities for social interaction among residents and through such interaction, a sense of belonging to the community is fostered (Prezza et al., 2001, Albanesi, 2007). Although only 30% of the respondents participate in the programs organized by Atira on a regular basis (Table 10), 90% of women felt that these programs provide opportunities for social interaction (Table 11). Most of them attend kids’ and family activities so that their children can participate in the program and the women can spend time with others. Vancouver Foundation Connect and Engage report also highlighted that neighbours enjoy meeting and forming relationships by attending a neighbourhood or community meetings, volunteering, and inviting neighbours into their home (2017, p.16). These findings illustrate a critical point that participation in community activities enhances a sense of community among residents and that engagement in community life and events is the building block of “community”.

The purpose of this research was to understand sense of community from a social interaction component using Kim and Kaplan’s hypothesized subcomponents of social interaction that include concepts such as casual social encounters (weak ties), social support (strong ties), neighbouring and community participation. My research

findings illustrate that Cadence women engage in casual and positive encounters with each other, and many have formed friendships, despite the presence of some activities that create annoyance among tenants. Participation in the on-site events and activities helps women to get to know one another better and the willingness to help one another was apparent among tenants. Overall, these social encounters with the other women in Cadence and their engagement with the community have allowed the women to feel sense of community and belonging to Cadence.

In Metro Vancouver, 64 percent of residents reported feeling welcome in their neighbourhoods and a sense of belonging (Connect and Engage, 2017, p.14). Households with income less than 20K, unemployed people (51%), or those who lived in Canada for 10 years or less (46%) are less likely to feel welcome or a sense of belonging (Vancouver Foundation, 2017, p.14). Considering that Cadence women would fall into one or more of these three sub-groups of people who are more likely to feel unwelcome in their neighbourhood, my research finding that 90 percent of Cadence women feeling welcome and accepted in their community, is quite a positive result.

6.3. Mixed-Income Housing and Social Mix

In this research, I wanted to understand how middle-income, amenity-rich neighborhoods help people improve their lives. Is it a matter of increasing access to high quality resources, or is it necessary to interact with neighbors to obtain the full benefit of such resources? Existing literature suggests that social interactions are supposed to enable “the low-income residents to become good citizens through the instrument of middle-class role modelling and leadership … as well as access to formal and informal networks …that link [them] to job opportunities” (Arthurson, 2010, p.51). This is said to be most easily achieved by placing low-income households in neighbourhoods predominantly occupied by private owners (Ruming et al., 2004, p.236) where social interactions among residents from different tenures are supposed to facilitate formation of social networks among homeowners and low-income residents.

However, it is not clear whether physically mixing people from different socioeconomic backgrounds leads to social interaction among different groups and whether the level of interaction that occurs is significant enough to have positive social outcomes. My review of literature suggests that the level of social interaction that occurs

among residents from different socioeconomic backgrounds is low (Jupp et al, 1999; Ruming et al, 2004; Bucerius et al., 2017), and this is what was echoed among my research participants. Most of the women I had interviews with had very little interactions with the market housing residents due to various reasons such as the homeowners being predominantly of Asian heritage (Chloe) or that they are physically separated from the market housing residents that prevent them from engaging in social interactions with them on a regular basis (Dawn).

In Cadence, the shared roof-top garden which is supposed to promote opportunities for interaction among people from different groups, never served as a place for the people from the two types of residences to socialize or "integrate." On the other hand, parking spaces were found to provide more opportunities for people to interact with each other due to repetitive encounters that parking spaces allow for. This is also supplemented by presence of children, who act as social bridge for the parents. This is similar to findings from earlier studies (Arthurson, 2010; Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000; Jupp et al., 1999) that highlighted that children acted as "catalysts" for mixing of residents across different income groups because children had "no notion of tenure difference" (Morris et al., 2012, p.9).

The extent to which Cadence women experienced positive neighbourhood effects through social interaction with the market housing residents is unknown; the results of this research were inconclusive in this respect. These brief encounters with the homeowners help Cadence women feel welcomed and accepted in their community and created stronger sense of community. However, these encounters are not at a level where the low-income residents are able to "access formal and informal networks …that link [them] to job opportunities" or any other opportunities that help them improve their lives. This is similar to findings of earlier studies on mixed-income housing (Ruming et al., 2004, Jupp et al., 1999; Bucerius et al., 2017). Furthermore, none of the women expressed desire for more interactions with the market housing residents and they felt that the market housing residents want to have nothing to do with them, knowing they are from second stage housing. Despite the limited social interaction with the market housing residents, women in Cadence view them as nice and polite people, who are there if they needed any help.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

As a master planned community, Cadence provided the women with opportunities to benefit from and appreciate the New Urbanism design features of the neighbourhood and the development but these features do not necessarily influence their patterns of social interaction. Cadence women engage in positive, both casual and deep, social interactions with each other and they also engage in brief encounters, facilitated by the presence of their children, with the homeowners. Consistent with other studies, my research suggests that social mix does not yield the hypothesized social benefits for the low-income residents due to lack of meaningful social interactions with the more affluent residents.

My findings suggest that the neighbourhood effects on low-income people from living in master planned, middle-income neighbourhoods are primarily resulted from access to quality neighbourhood services and amenities as well as access to safe and affordable housing. The improved quality of life and feeling of safety and security can have a positive influence on women's mental health which could positively influence their children's development outcomes down the road.

As Cadence is supportive housing, women benefit from in-house community building and life skills building activities that are organized and facilitated by Atira staff. This highlights the importance of local programs and services that are aimed at alleviating poverty and providing opportunities for low-income residents to establish social ties in these newly built neighbourhoods.

On the other hand, it is not enough to bring people to one physical location and expect them to engage in social interactions and build a "community". Low-levels of social mixing like in the case of Cadence, which has only 5 percent of affordable housing units clustered in one block results in more stigma and social discrimination than positive social outcome, similar to findings in a research by Ruming et al (2004). This was evident among Cadence women who felt hyper-surveilled and unwelcomed when they were on the roof-top garden that ultimately led them to avoid using the space in the future. As Sarah Louie noted, Cadence women can't feel a part of an inclusive community if they are only allowed to go to certain areas or when they are constantly looked down upon or video taped when they are in common areas of the complex.

7.1. Considerations for Urban Planners

Current configuration of Cadence poses a barrier for them to build relationships with the market housing residents. Community building efforts or interventions need to be in place in order for any mixed-income developments, especially those with separate doors, to succeed in delivering a socially inclusive and cohesive community that fosters a sense of community as a whole. Alternatively, distributing affordable housing units throughout the development will limit people's ability to discriminate others based on where they live. Without the "us and them" perception, residents may be more inclined to engage in meaningful interactions with others in the neighbourhood.

From a socioeconomic perspective, the income discrepancy among residents, both market and affordable housing, is quite significant in the case of Cadence. The majority of women in the affordable housing units are on welfare whereas the market housing residents either own or rent at market rate in the very same building. Earlier studies have shown that low-income households and higher income households have different social circles that tend not to overlap. As part of this, low-income households are likely to have denser neighbourhood-level social ties whereas higher-income residents tend to have social ties spread outside their immediate neighbourhood. Introducing gradual income-mix in master planned communities may help the residents establish social ties with others in the community. Decreasing the income discrepancy among residents through more graduated income-mix than is the case in Cadence may help residents to establish ties that may not happen otherwise.

Additionally, meaningful social interactions among residents from different tenures take time to forge. With Cadence having limited tenure length, residents from both sides do not have the opportunity to build and nurture that relationship. If the intention of building mixed income communities is to increase social capital and help the low income households move up the social ladder, then, longer term tenancy is needed for cases similar to Cadence. After all, the current average wait time is five to seven years for subsidized housing to become available within BC Housing's portfolio (AHS Update, 2019, p.5) and longer term tenancy will allow for the affordable housing tenants to transition to subsidized housing within their immediate neighbourhood.

In terms of amenities, there is a lot of emphasis on shared amenities to bring people together. Based on my research findings, common areas of the building, including the lobby, elevator, and parking spaces indeed provide opportunities for informal social interactions. Had the residential strata allowed access to the club house for the affordable housing tenants, there might have been more opportunities to build relationships there through repetitive encounters. This highlights the need for the municipalities to provide oversight on how these mixed-income, master planned communities are actually working on the ground. Municipalities should also invest in educating the broader community on affordable housing and work with developers and strata corporations to ensure that the common spaces in developments are open and accessible to everyone in the building, not just on paper.

Having on-site childcare found to be quite beneficial for Cadence women who either worked or studied. Majority of my research participants were on welfare but two women who did work and went to school, used the daycare regularly and appreciated having it on-site. I know one of Cadence women completed her Early Childhood Educator practicum at Willow and continued to work there as an Educator until they moved out of Cadence. Establishment of a childcare facility within the development is probably the most beneficial amenity you can provide to low-income households who are looking for opportunities to enter workforce, enhance their job-skills, or go to school to improve their circumstances.

7.2. Limitations & Directions for Future Research

I employed a case study method to conduct my research and I meant to capture the accounts of the women who shared their stories with me. As such, the study findings and the experiences shared in this study are not meant to be generalizable or representative of the broader community. My research only focused on the perspectives of the affordable housing tenants. In a future study, it would be beneficial to inquire into the market housing residents' attitudes towards mixed-income housing.

Cadence tenants are lone-parents who have fled domestic violence. It was beyond the scope of my research to investigate how trauma can shape how your willingness and ability to establish social ties and build community with others. However, it is an important line of inquiry that needs investigating.

Further research is needed to understand if the reasons and stories of these research participants are specific to Cadence, as clustered units with a separate entrance or if low-income households living in distributed affordable housing units or in developments that have gradual income mix share similar experiences. Future comparative studies are needed to examine the experiences of people living in affordable housing units with long-term tenancy, their social interactions, and the results in terms of belonging and sense of community.

Cadence women had brief but positive encounters with the homeowners but none indicated that they exchanged information or resources that helped improve their lives in any way. A more comprehensive study is needed to understand if the social interaction that occurs among people from different income groups could result in positive neighbourhood effects, especially in a Canadian context. On the other hand, my findings suggest that the neighbourhood effects on low-income people from living in master planned, mixed-income neighbourhoods primarily result from access to quality neighbourhood services and amenities as well as access to safe and affordable housing. However, a longitudinal study is needed to examine the long-term effect of living in mixed-income, master planned neighbourhoods on adults and children with different socioeconomic status and life circumstances.

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Appendix.

Online Survey Questions for Cadence Tenants

1. How long have you been living in Cadence?
    - 0-3 months
    - 4-6 months
    - 7-12 months
    - 1-2 years
    - Over 2 years
2. Which municipality (neighbourhood) did you live in previously?

    _____
3. What is your current employment status?
    - Employed full-time
    - Employed part-time
    - Unemployed, looking for work
    - Unemployed, attending school
    - Homemaker/ caregiver

4. What is your age?
    - 18-24
    - 25-34
    - 35-44
    - 45-54
    - 55-64
    - Over 65

5. How many children do you have living with you? Please indicate the number in each age category:
    - 5 years and under _____
    - 6 - 10 years old _____
    - 11 – 15 years old _____
    - 16-18 years old _____

6. Please tell me importance of the following features to you.

	Not at all important	Not Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Important	Very Important
Public transportation					

Shops and services nearby					
Access to affordable housing					
Good quality housing					
Don't have to worry about getting evicted					
Onsite daycare					
Friendly people					
Personal safety and safety of my children					
Sense of community					
Cleanliness					
Quality landlord					
Good neighbourhood					
Other (please describe)_____					

7. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel welcome in my community and feel like I belong here.					
I have issues with neighbours.					
Cadence is too far from friends and family.					

I can't access necessary services nearby.					
I have difficulties with transportation.					
Quality of housing is adequate.					
I feel safe living in this building.					
Other (please describe)_____					

8. In the six months before public health directive to stay at home, how often do you use the following spaces in your building and neighbourhood?

	Daily	2-3 times/ week	Weekly	Monthly	Never
6 Floor roof-top garden					
Childcare - Willow					
Cadence Clubhouse (gym etc)					
Community Centre					
Parks and trails nearby					
Cafes and restaurants					
Grocery store					
Drug store					
Others (please describe)					

9. Pleases answer the following questions about how well you know your neighbours.

	0	1-3	4-6	More than 6
How many of your neighbours do you know on first name basis?				
How many of your immediate neighbours (on the same floor) do you typically stop and chat with when you				

run into them? Could be anything from "hello, how are you" to more significant chats.				
How many of your neighbours do you feel comfortable borrowing a small household item?				
How many of your neighbours do you consider friends (people who are not your relatives, but who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind or call on for help)?				
How many of your neighbours do you feel comfortable asking to care for your child in times of need?				
How many of your neighbours could you talk to if you had a crisis?				

10. Where do you usually interact with your neighbours? Please check all that apply.
    - o Building entrance
    - o Mailroom/ lobby
    - o Childcare
    - o Elevator
    - o Staircase
    - o Roof top garden
    - o Clubhouse
    - o Parking
    - o Neighbourhood amenities
    - o Other (please describe)_____

11. Do you wish that you know more people in your building or in your neighbourhood?
    - o Yes
    - o No

12. What makes you not want to get to know your neigbours better? Please select all that apply.
    - o I prefer to maintain privacy
    - o I already spend a lot of time with my neighbours
    - o I already have enough friends
    - o I do not feel like I have enough time
    - o The building/ my neighbours are unfriendly
    - o Currently, social distancing is more important
    - o I do not have anything important to offer
    - o Other (please specify _____

13. How often do you feel annoyed or disturbed by the behaviours of your neighbours?
    - o Never

- Seldom
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

14. Please describe a time when you were annoyed with or disturbed by the behaviours of your neighbours? (eg noise, improper garbage disposal)

    _____

15. How often do you participate in the onsite programs organized by Atira?
    - Always
    - Often
    - Sometimes
    - Seldom
    - Never

16. What programs do you participate in?

    _____

17. Do you think that these programs provide opportunities for you to interact with your neighbours?
    - Yes
    - No

18. Do you feel that you have a sense of community with your neighbours in Cadence?

    Sense of community is a feeling that you belong to a community or feel at home in Cadence.

    - Yes
    - No

19. Why do you feel that way?

Do you wish to participate in a follow-up phone interview?

You will receive an additional $20 Shoppers Drug Mart gift card for your participation in the phone interview.

- Yes
- No

Please include your phone number I can reach you at: _____

When is the best time to call you? _____